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INDIAN TRAITS:

BEING

SKETCHES

OF THE

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CHARACTER

OF THE

NORTH AMERICAN NATIVES.

BY

B. B. THATCHER,

AUTHOR OF "LIVES OF THE INDIANS," IN THE FAMILY
LIBRARY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

GAMES and SPORTS of the Indians, continued—Riding and Racing—Game of the Platter—Game of the Mocassin—Buggasauk—Smoking—The Calumet—Feasts—Knistenaux Amusements.

Horse-racing is not a common amusement even among those of the Indian tribes who profit by the services of that useful animal. They however ride extremely well; and it is almost incredible, especially, with what speed and fearlessness they pursue the buffalo on the western plains, without either saddle or bridle, and at the same time with arms in their hands.*

Adair, speaking of the awkward custom, among the southern Indians, of mounting a horse on what is called by the whites the ‘off side,’ relates an adventure in the course of which he endeavored to convince a party of Choetaws that his mode of riding was preferable to theirs. They were all going, in company, to a grand

* See Frontispiece. Vol. I.

ball-play which was to take place in a village at a considerable distance. On the way, they alighted beside a cool stream of water, to smoke, and to refresh themselves with a frugal meal of parched corn-flour and water.

In setting off on their journey again, some pleasant conversation arose about the right mode of mounting; and the Indians contended, that it was most natural and most convenient, to put the right foot into the stirrup—(the southern tribes used a rude kind of saddle)—and to lay hold of the mane with the strongest hand. They carried their argument by a majority of voices, whooping and laughing in high spirits. They also boasted of their skill in guiding a horse with only a rope, which they used for a bridle. Mr. Adair resolved to convince them of their mistake. He was riding a horse, called the ‘Eagle,’ from his remarkable fleetness; and relying on the excellence of this animal, he challenged his savage companions to a trial of speed and science.

They readily accepted his offer. As the party was travelling along a narrow and crooked wood-path, they ranged themselves abreast on each side of it, politely leaving the centre for the white man. At the signal agreed on,—

a whoop from those of the party who stood by as spectators,—the horsemen started off together. Adair's horse was accustomed to such diversion, and soon left his comrades some distance behind. Presently after he discovered a swampy thicket, ahead, on his right hand, which ran, in almost their direct course, alongside of a creek. He flew rapidly across, and led two of the Indian horses, which were rather wild, off the path, into the thicket. He pushed on, shouting, and cracking his whip; and his pursuers pushed after him at full speed,—their horses being now so much frightened that with their rope-bridles they had not the least check upon them. They came out of the swamp at last, into the open woods. The Indians whooped and halloed, as if despising what they had undergone; but (says Mr. Adair,) 'they were in a dismal pickle.' They had dressed and decorated themselves in great style, for the ball-play; but, in stooping to save themselves from being dismounted in the course of the swamp-chase, their little looking-glasses had been shattered to pieces, the paint rubbed off their faces, their hawk-skins and plume-tufts torn from their heads, and their other ornaments, garments and all, not much more improved by the excursion.

As soon as the horses could be stopped, they alighted. Their antagonist laughed at them heartily, which they bore with very good humor, only saying *La phene! La phene!* ('Oh! strange!') The spectators, coming up by this time, also joined in the laugh. They had expected, they said, that the white man would jockey them in exactly this manner. But all this had no effect in convincing the unlucky horsemen that their defeat was owing to their rope-bridles. They thought, 'The white man's horse was *mad*;' and '*that* was the reason he had beaten them.'

The passion for gaming is observed by travelers among those Indians the remotest from civilized population. Mc'Kenzie witnessed a quarrel between two individuals of one of the Rocky-Mountain tribes, which rose to such a height that they drew their knives upon each other, and nothing but his own interference probably saved the life of one of the parties. So violent was their rage, that after he had turned them both out of doors, and severely reprimanded them, they stood looking at each other, with threatening looks, though in sullen silence, for at least half an hour. It was ascertained, on inquiry, that their enmity took its rise in a

favorite game, which Mc'Kenzie calls the 'game of the Platter,' and which is evidently, from his description, substantially the same with the New England game of the 'Tray' and 'Plumstone,' and the Canadian game of the 'Dish.' Tanner speaks of playing it recently, too, among the Chippewas, and other tribes of the North-West. They call it *Bug-ga-sauk*. The dice which he used were pieces of an old kettle,—stained on one side, and kept bright on the other,—and shaken in a large wooden bowl kept for the purpose.

The 'game of the *Mocassin*' is played among the same tribes, by any number of persons, but usually by small parties. Four mocassins are used; and in one of them some small object, such as a little stick or piece of cloth, is hid by one of the betting parties. The mocassins are laid together, and the opponent is invited to touch. If he points out the one which contains the stick, the player loses *eight* to him; if he guesses wrong, he loses. The Knistenaux play the same game differently, endeavoring to come last to the mocassin which contains the hidden articles. The value of property is staked by agreement, previous to betting. A beaver-skin, for instance, or a blanket, is called ten; a horse,

perhaps one hundred. With strangers they are apt to play very high; and in that case a horse is sometimes valued at ten.*

The Indian habit of *smoking* has been alluded to; and this, considering their strong predilection for it, and its almost universal prevalence, must certainly be allowed to hold a high place among their amusements, independently of the use which we shall find to be made of it in religious and other ceremonies. Roger Williams says that the New-England Indians gave two reasons for the practice; first, that it was an effectual preventive against certain pains, such as the tooth-ache; and second, that, as they drank nothing but water, it served them a good purpose as a lively refreshment. No doubt, still another reason was, and is, that smoking is an easy way of occupying leisure-time, which might otherwise, in the case of an ignorant savage, move rather heavily.

A large pipe commonly called by the whites the 'Pipe of Peace,' or the *Calumet*, has always been a favorite article in the negotiation of treaties, and the entertainment of travellers. The meaning was the same in all cases. It was an exchange and pledge of faith between

* Tanner's Narrative.

those parties who joined in smoking. When, for example, a party of strangers came into an Indian village, the pipe of peace was brought out, filled with tobacco, and lit in the presence of the strangers. The principal man in the village then took two or three whiffs, and handed it to the chief of the strangers. If the latter refused to smoke, it was regarded as a sign of hostility. If he wished, however, to be considered an ally or friend, he took a whiff or two, and then presented it to the person who appeared to be the second great man of the village. And thus it was passed to and fro, until most of the people of note on both sides had smoked more or less.

In all parts of the country the calumet was made larger and much handsomer than the ordinary pipe. The head or bowl, made of stone, was finely polished; and the quill or tube, in length about two and a half feet, was made of a pretty strong reed or cane. It was adorned with feathers of various brilliant colors, interlaced with locks of female hair; and sometimes two wings of a rare bird attached to it in such a manner as to give it the appearance of what the ancient Greeks and Romans in their mythology, called '*Mercury's Wand*.'

The French traveller La Hontan, gives a very similar description of the calumet which he saw used among several of the Canadian tribes, with a draught of the instrument.



Beverly, who wrote the History of Virginia about a century since, has also a draught of the twisted calumet of that part of the country. The remotest Western tribes use one of which the handle is a yard long.

Mc'Kenzie, speaking of the Knistenaux, says, that smoking-rites of some kind precede, among that people, every matter of great importance. Whatever contract is entered into and solemnized by the ceremony of smoking, it never fails of being faithfully fulfilled. If a person, previous to his going a journey, leaves the sacred stem as a pledge of his return, no consideration whatever will prevent him from executing his engagement.

The pipe is also used at the entertainments sometimes furnished by a leading man. A Knistenau chief, when he proposes to make a feast, sends quills, or small pieces of wood, as tokens of invitation to such as he wishes to

partake of it. At the appointed time the guests arrive, each bringing a dish or platter, and a knife, and take their seats on each side of the chief, who receives them sitting, according to their respective ages. The pipe is then lighted, and he makes an equal division of every thing that is provided. While the company are enjoying their meal, the chief sings, and accompanies his song with the tambourin, or *shishi-quoi*, or rattle. The guest who has first eaten his portion is considered as the most distinguished person. If there should be any who cannot finish the whole of their mess, they endeavor to prevail on some of their friends to eat it for them, who are rewarded for their assistance with ammunition and tobacco. It is usually also the case, that at these feasts a small quantity of meat or drink is sacrificed, before they begin to eat, by throwing it into the fire, or on the earth.

These feasts differ according to circumstances. Sometimes each man's allowance is no more than he can despatch in a couple of hours. At other times the quantity is sufficient to supply each of them with food for a week, though it must be devoured in a day. On these occasions it is very difficult to procure substi-

tutes, although the whole must be eaten, whatever time it may require. At some of these entertainments there is a more rational arrangement, when the guests are allowed to carry home with them the superfluous part of their portions. *Public* feasts have always been in use to some extent, for the celebration of funerals; annually, in honor of the dead; in honor of the hunter's *medicine* or *charm*, and other religious occasions; but in modern times they are less attended to than formerly.

Among the Lake Indians, Mr. Tanner states that the 'Feast with the Dead,' is eaten at the graves of deceased friends. They kindle a fire; and each person, before he begins to eat, cuts off a small piece of meat, which he casts into the flame, as a sacrifice to some spirit whose favor they wish to conciliate. They have also feasts made after dreaming something remarkable, called 'Dream-Feasts;' Feasts for giving names to children, when the guests are expected to eat every thing set before them; 'War-Feasts,' which we may refer to again; and various other festivities, too numerous to be described, and scarcely of consequence enough to deserve mention.

CHAPTER II.

Anecdotes of Indian WARFARE—Indian ideas of war—Occasions and modes of commencing it—War-songs—Ceremonies observed by young warriors—Stratagems used in war—Scalping—War-‘whoops’—Anecdotes of Southern wars—Torture of prisoners—Running the gantlet—Anecdotes of whites captured by the Indians—Of their mode of fighting the whites—Of skirmishes on the frontiers.

A passion for warlike glory is the strongest by which the American savage is distinguished. From his earliest infancy he is taught to regard, as the highest object of his existence, the conquest of his foe in the forest, and the triumph of bringing home with him that precious trophy, the scalp.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be supposed that pretexts for waging war will be wanting, especially since it is also a sacred maxim among all the tribes to revenge every insult or injury, at whatever cost. It often occurs, indeed, that a scalping-party is fitted out against a neighboring tribe, under the direction of one or more principal warriors, anxious to acquire reputation or to retaliate for some private indignity, but at the same time unable to procure the assent of their nation to a

general war. This happens, usually, between nations which have so long been hostile to each other that they think it unnecessary to go through with the ceremony of declaring war.

The ceremonies which precede the setting out of a war-party differ much, in the case of different nations; and also, among the same nation, in the case of the different kinds of expeditions. Whether the party be a private one, collected by the influence of some eminent war-chief, or an expedition authorised by the whole tribe, it is preceded by a council of war, by fasting and dancing, and sometimes by a sacrifice. The ancient custom of leaving a war-club in the territory of the enemy, as a *manifesto*, is not now observed. The fasting is often carried to such a length, as to weaken the warrior on his march even more than his fatigue. The *war-song*, as the party march out from their own village, is never forgotten. Of this there are many varieties. It commonly amounts to what Mr. Heckewelder gives as the translation of the song of the Delawares:

‘ O poor me!

Who am going out to fight the enemy,

And know not whether I shall return again,

To enjoy the embraces of my children

And my wife.

O poor creature!
 Whose life is not in his own hands,
 Who has no power over his own body
 But tries to do his duty
 For the welfare of his nation.
 O thou Great Spirit above!
 Take pity on my children,
 And on my wife!
 Prevent their mourning on my account!
 Grant that I may be successful in this attempt—
 That I may slay my enemy,
 And bring home the trophies of war
 To my dear family and friends,
 That we may rejoice together.
 O take pity on me!
 Give me strength and courage to meet my enemy;
 Suffer me to return again to my children,
 To my wife
 And to my relations!
 Take pity on me and preserve my life,
 And I will make to thee a sacrifice.

Mr. Schoolcraft, in his *Travels*, has the following translation of a Chippewa war-song, addressed to the women of the tribe, who are always left at home.

Do not—do not weep for me,
 Loved woman, should I die,—
 For yourselves alone, should you weep.
 Poor are ye all, and to be pitied.
 Ye women! ye are to be pitied!

I seek—I seek our fallen relations;
 I go to revenge—revenge the slain;
 Our relations, fallen and slain.

And our foes—our foes, they shall lie
Like them—like them they shall lie:
I go—I go, to lay them low—to lay them low?
Do not—do not, &c.

In these songs it is customary for each warrior to sing an independent verse, which is complete in itself, consisting of one or two lines, with the same words often repeated and transposed. The most precise time is kept, and when the number of syllables in a word or line is not sufficient to complete the measure, short interjections as *he—ha—heh* &c. are uttered to supply the deficiency.

Every thing being made ready for the expedition—the council held—the dance performed—the fasting observed—and, in a word, that courage, which is the main object of the ceremonies, worked up to the highest point—the party commences its march for the enemy's country. But the young warrior's penance is not yet over. For the first three times that he accompanies a war-party, he is obliged by custom to paint his face black; to wear a cap or head-dress of some kind; and to follow the older warriors, walking in their tracks instead of preceding them. He must never scratch his head with his fingers, nor suffer any other

person to touch the vessel or knife which he uses at his meals.

Such at least is the practice of several of the Northern tribes. Tanner also states, that they observe a certain order in their encampments on the march. If there are bushes where they halt, the camp is enclosed by these, stuck into the ground so as to form a square, with a passage at one end, which is always that towards the enemy's country. If there are not bushes, they mark the ground, in the same manner, with small sticks. Near the passage-way of the camp, is the place of the principal chief and the old warriors; next follow in order the younger men; and, last of all, in the farther end of the camp, are those with blackened faces who are making their first excursions. All sleep with their faces towards their own country; and on no consideration make any change of attitude; and no two lie under the same blanket. If on their marches they ever sit down, it must be on something besides the naked ground. Their feet and legs are to be kept as dry as possible, and they must never walk in any beaten path. Religious ceremonies, as well as fasting, are observed on the march.

Frequently they carry with them their *Jebi*,

or memorials of their friends and relatives formerly slain by the enemy,—the object of which is to animate the courage of the party. If a warrior has lost, by death, a favorite child, he carries, if possible, some article of dress, or perhaps some toy, which belonged to the child, or more commonly a lock of his hair, which they seek to throw away on the field of battle. The scouts who precede a war-party into an enemy's country, if they happen, in lurking about their lodges, or in their old encampments, to discover any of the toys that have been dropped by the children, such as little bows, or even a piece of a broken arrow, pick it up, and carefully preserve it until they return to the party: then, if they know of a man who has lost his child, they throw it to him, saying, 'your little son is in that place; we saw him playing with the children of our enemies: will you go and see him?' The bereaved father commonly takes it up, and having looked upon it awhile, falls to crying, and is then ready and eager to go against the enemy. An Indian chief, when he leads out his war-party, has no other means of control over the individuals composing it, than his personal influence gives him; it is therefore necessary they should have

some method of rousing and stimulating themselves to exertion.*

Tanner mentions, that in one of the expeditions he attended, the abstinence we have mentioned was carried so far as to produce a general vomiting of blood, so that the party were at length compelled to break through the custom. Adair, who accompanied the southern warriors on similar occasions, used to relieve his excessive thirst by carrying with him *a large hollow cane*, well corked at each end, from which he managed occasionally to take a draught by silyly sheering aside from the path. These Indians, during the whole march, would not lean against any support, either sitting or standing; nor, in the daytime, sit beneath the shade of a tree.

The common number of a party is not above forty, lest their tracks should discover them by being too numerous; though, if the distance be not very far to march, the invading tribe generally endeavors to outnumber a common company, that they may strike their blow with the more safety and success—their art of war chiefly consisting in the art of surprise. The precautions practised, especially as they approach the enemy's villages, are shrewd and sagacious.

* Tanner's Narrative, p. 124.

Often, a numerous company, to prevent their tracks being followed, will walk in three or two rows, or perhaps only one, every man lifting his feet so high as not to bear down the grass. Thus the whole row will make but one man's track; and the largest-footed man of the party will walk behind, that he may smooth over the tracks of the others. Sometimes they fix the broad hoofs of buffaloes, or bear's paws, upon their feet, to deceive the foe; and for miles together, they will make all the customary windings of those animals in the woods.

On arriving near the place which is to be attacked, or when they stop on their route to lie in ambush for a party which they understand to be out against them, they range themselves cautiously on both sides the expected path, frequently in a half-moon line, and as far apart as they can hear the travelling-*signal* from each other. This is a whistle; or perhaps the mimicking of such birds or beasts as are known to frequent the spot: They imitate with surprising accuracy the cry of almost every wild creature of the woods;—the roar of the buffalo, the howl of the wolf, the neighing of the wild horse, the chattering of squirrels, and the hooting of the owl, all with the same ease.

When enemies, after all their stratagems of reconnoitring, finally discover each other, 'every one,' says Adair, 'at the signal of the shrill-sounding war-ery, instantly covers himself behind a tree, or in some cavity of the ground where it admits of the best safety. The leader, on each side, immediately blows the small whistle he carries for the occasion, in imitation of the ancient trumpet, as the last signal of engagement. Now hot work begins:—the guns are firing; the chewed bullets flying; the strong hickory bows a twanging; the dangerous barbed arrows whizzing as they fly; the sure-shafted javelin striking death wherever it reaches; and the well-aimed tomohawk killing or disabling its enemy. Nothing, scarcely, can be heard for the shrill echoing noise of the war and death-whoop. Every one furiously pursues his adversary from tree to tree, striving to encircle him for his pray; and the greedy jaws of pale death are open on all sides, to swallow them up. One dying foe is entangled in the hateful and faltering arms of another; and each party desperately attempts both to save their dead and wounded from being scalped, and to gain the scalps of their opponents. On this the battle commences anew; but rash attempts fail, as

their wary spirits always forbid them from entering into a general close engagement. Now they retreat. Then they draw up into various figures, still having their dead and wounded under their eye. Now they are flat on the ground loading their pieces—then they are up firing behind trees, and immediately spring off in an oblique course to recruit—and thus they act till winged victory declares itself.'

Scalping, which is the most important part of an Indian's campaigns, and is a custom prevalent throughout North America, is performed thus: 'They seize the head of the disabled or dead person, and placing one of their feet on the neck, they, with one hand twisted in the lock of hair which a warrior always leaves on his crown, extend it as far as they can. With the other hand, they draw the long sharp-pointed scalping-knife, give a slash with it round the top of the skull; and with a few dexterous scoops, soon strip it off. The scalp is afterwards commonly painted, as well as dried, and carried home, strung on a hoop or pole, to be preserved. A successful party, on their return into their own village, never fail to make known their number of scalps by the number of what are called the *scalp-yells*.

Different from this yell is the *alarm-whoop*. This is never sounded but when danger is at hand. It is performed in quick succession, much as with us the repeated cry of *Fire! Fire!* when the alarm is very great, and lives are known or believed to be in danger. Both this and the scalp-yell consist of the sounds *aw* and *oh*, successively uttered, the last more accented, and sounded higher than the first: but in the *scalp-yell*, this last sound is drawn out at great length, as long indeed, as the breath will hold, and is raised about an octave higher than the former; while in the *alarm-whoop*, it is rapidly struck on, as it were, and only a few notes above the other.* Tanner says, that he has seen the strangest terror manifested by wild beasts at the sound of the different *war-whoops*.

For various reasons large war-parties, after all the ceremonies we have mentioned, and frequently after nearly reaching the enemy's country, are broken up by desertion or disagreement, or perhaps go back all together. Frequently some ominous *dream* is the pretext, and probably with many the real reason for this conduct. Tanner joined one party of one thousand and four hundred warriors, of different tribes, who

* Heckewelder's Account.

marched a long distance against the Sioux of the Mississippi, but broke up and returned in small parties, without striking a blow.

This was an extraordinary number for a war-party. Sometimes one or two young warriors, only, set off for the enemy's territory. When the Five Nations of New York and the Cherokees were at war with each other, several years before the American Revolution, two of the former people undertook an expedition of this kind. They advanced southward, through the forests, until they came into the immediate vicinity of some of the Cherokee villages. Here they so cunningly ambuscaded them through most part of the spring and summer, as to kill above twenty in different attacks, before they were discovered by the scouts of the enraged and dejected enemy. They had a thorough knowledge of the most convenient ground for their purpose, and were extremely swift. Whenever they killed any, and got the scalp, they made off to the neighboring mountains, and ran over the broad ledges of rocks, in contrary courses, as occasion offered, so as altogether to baffle their pursuers. Once, when a large company was in chase of them, they ran round a steep hill at the head of the main

eastern branch of Savannah river, intercepted, killed, and scalped the hindmost of the party, and then made off between them and Keowee: as this was the town to which the company belonged, they hastened home in a close body, as the proper place of security from such 'wizards.'

They continued this course nearly four months. At length, having sufficiently revenged the blood of their relations, and gratified their own ambition with an unusual number of scalps, they resolved to capture and carry off one of the enemy's number, and so return home in great triumph. They therefore approached very near to Keowee, one crawling along cautiously among the underwood around that village, about one hundred yards ahead of the other, who was meanwhile shifting his position from tree to tree, and keeping a sharp watch. Unluckily, towards evening, they were discovered from the top of an adjoining hill, by an old Cherokee, who knew them to be enemies by the cut of their hair, and their light trim for running, and sly movements.

The alarm being given in the village, the youth belonging to it, by the direction of the head-warriors, soon began the noisy public diversions which they were accustomed to practice. Meanwhile, runners were sent to tho

neighboring towns, to call in other warriors of the tribe. The latter mustered on all sides, but with great wariness and perfect silence. They formed a large semi-circle round about the scouts, hemming them in to the bank of the river, near the town. Gradually they closed in a narrower compass, and at last discovered the two unfortunate warriors lying under the tops of some fallen young pine-trees. The company raised the war-whoop, and rushed on. The scouts, surprised, but not disheartened, rose up and bravely repeated it. A desperate struggle ensued; and though their arms were of no use to them in this situation, they knocked down and nearly killed a gigantic Cherokee, the strongest man of the whole nation. But the contest was soon decided. They were overpowered by numbers, carried off bound, and soon after put to death amidst an immense congregation of their exulting foes.*

Mr. Adair describes the mode of torture practised by the Southern Indians. The victim was first stripped quite naked; a pair of bear-skin mocassins put on his feet, with the fur outside; and a burning fire-brand fastened, a little over his head, to the pole or stake at

* Adair.

which he was tied. Bundles of dry canes, or fine splinters, were prepared by all who wished to have a part in the horrible sacrifice. The death-signal being given, 'the vietim's arms are fast pinioned, and a strong grape-vine is tied round his neck, to the top of the war-pole, allowing him to track around about fifteen yards. They fix some tough clay on his head, to secure the scalp from the blazing torches. Unspeakable pleasure now fills the exulting erowd of spectators, and the circle fills with themerciless executioners:—The suffering warrior however is not dismayed; with an insulting manly voice he sings the war-song; and with gallant contempt he tramples the rattling gourd with pebbles in it to pieces, and outbraves even death itself. The women make a furious onset with their burning torches: his pain is soon so excruciating, that he rushes out from the pole, with the fury of the most savage beast of prey, and with the vine sweeps down all before him, kicking, biting, and trampling them, with the greatest despite. The circle immediately fills again, either with the same, or fresh persons: they attack him on every side—now he runs to the pole for shelter, but the flames pursue him.' The result may be easily imagined.

The fortitude with which the Indians endure these horrid tortures, is no less remarkable than the ferocity with which they inflict them. Charlevoix relates that an Indian of the Ottagami or Fox tribe was tortured by the Illinois. After loading them with all the insults he could think of, he looked around, and saw among their number a Frenchman from Canada whom he knew. He called out to him, to '*assist the Illinois in tormenting him.*' '*And why should I assist them?*' cried the Frenchman. '*That I may have the comfort of dying by the hands of a MAN,*' said the prisoner;—'*my greatest grief is that I never killed a MAN.*' Here an Illinois interrupted him, and said that he *had* killed such and such persons,—naming several of the Illinois tribe. '*Ha! Ha! The Illinois, indeed!*'—said the captive with an air of contemptuous defiance—'*The Illinois! I have killed enough of them, truly; but I never have killed a MAN!*' His enraged foes probably soon paid him for this speech, as he expected and hoped, with a death-blow.

A warrior of the Five Nations, captured by the Canadian Hurons, distinguished himself by still greater hardihood. They made him mount a sort of scaffold, where they burned him all

over the body, but in such a manner as not to endanger his life. This he bore with as little apparent concern as if he had been a statue of stone. He did not even deign to revile his tormentors. Maddened by his coolness, they came on again, with all kinds of contrivances for inflicting pain. One of them at length cut the skin of his head all round, and pulled it off with great violence. This made him drop to the ground, senseless. Thinking him dead, they withdrew. But a little while afterwards, he recovered. Seeing nobody near him, he seized a fire-brand, shouted to his enemies, and defied them to come near him. Frightened by his appearance, they collected a large force, some with burning fire-brands, and others with red-hot irons, and fell upon him all together. He received them bravely, and made them retreat. No one dared to approach a man who was more than half burnt, and whose blood was streaming from all parts of his body. Thus he kept them at bay for a long time; and nothing but a false step, made in avoiding a fire-brand hurled at his head, finally gave his enemies an advantage which enabled them to approach and destroy him.

It should by no means be understood from

the anecdotes just given, that the custom of torturing prisoners, or even of killing them in any way, is universal among the Indians. It is more unfrequent in modern times than formerly; but it scarcely ever was practised except when the torturing party had lost a great number of warriors during the campaign, or when their enemies had conducted the war with unusual ferocity. The prospect of escape for an old and distinguished foe, was indeed rather small. The young warriors, on the other hand, were not unfrequently *adopted* by some family who had lost a son. Many of the whites, taken by the Indians, have been spared with this view, and lived subsequently, for a long time, (as Tanner did,) among their conquerors.

‘*Running the Gantlet*,’ as the whites call it, is another mode of occasional escape, attended with more hazard. In this case, much depends on the prisoner’s presence of mind. On being brought into the village of his conquerors, he is shown a painted post at the distance of perhaps from twenty to forty yards, and told to run to it as quick as possible, for his life. On each side of him stands a row of men, women and children, with sticks and other weapons, ready to strike him as he runs.

If a captive in such a situation shows a determined courage, and when bid to run for the painted post, starts at once with all his might, and exerts all his strength and agility until he reaches it, he will most commonly escape without much harm, and sometimes without any injury whatever; and on reaching the desired point, he will have the satisfaction to hear his courage and bravery applauded. But wo to the coward who hesitates, or shows any symptoms of fear! He is treated without much mercy, and is happy, at last, if he escapes with his life.

In 1782, when Mr. Heckewelder was detained a prisoner among a party of Indians in the British interest, he witnessed a scene of the description referred to. Three American prisoners were one day brought in by fourteen warriors from the garrison of Fort M'Intosh. As soon as they had crossed the Sandusky river, to which the village lay adjacent, they were told by the captain of the party to run as hard as they could to a painted post which was shown to them. The youngest of the three, without a moment's hesitation, immediately started for it, and reached it fortunately without receiving a single blow; the second

hesitated for a moment, but recollecting himself, he also ran as fast as he could and likewise reached the post unhurt; but the third, frightened at seeing so many men, women and children with weapons in their hands, ready to strike him, kept begging the captain to spare his life, saying he was a mason, and 'he would build him a fine large stone house, or do any work for him that he should please.' 'Run for your life,' cried the captain; 'Run! and don't talk now of building houses'! But the poor fellow still insisted, begging and praying to the captain, who at last finding his exhortations vain, and fearing the consequences, turned his back upon him and would not hear him any longer. Our mason now began to run, but received many a hard blow. One of them nearly brought him to the ground, which, if he had fallen, would at once have decided his fate. He, however, reached the goal, not without being sadly bruised; and he was, besides, bitterly reproached and scoffed at all round as a vile coward, while the others were hailed as brave men, and received tokens of universal approbation.

A story recorded of one of the first settlers of Kentucky, one Simon Butler, is a remarkable specimen of those most singular adventures

which the whites of the frontiers have occasionally had among the Indians. During the Revolutionary war, he undertook a journey to the northern regions of what is now Ohio, and was made prisoner by the savages. They painted him black, as is their custom, when a victim is devoted to torture; and informed him, that he was destined to be burned at Chillieothe. Meanwhile, for their own amusement, and as a prelude of his torture, they manaeled him, hand and foot, placed him on an unbridled and unbroken horse, and turned the animal loose, driving it off at its utmost speed, with shouts, delighted with witnessing its mode of disposing of its living burden. The horse, unable to shake off this new and strange incumbrance, made for the thickest covert of woods and brambles with the speed of the winds. It is easy to conjecture the position and sufferings of the victim. The terrified animal exhausted itself in fruitless efforts, to shake off its burden, and worn down and subdued, brought Butler back amidst the exulting yells of the savages to the camp.

Arrived within a mile of Chillieothe, they halted, took Butler from his horse, and tied him to a stake, where he remained twenty-four

hours in one position. He was taken from the stake to 'run the gantlet.' If he reached the council-house alive, he was to be spared. In the lines were nearly six hundred Indians, and Butler had to make his way almost a mile in the endurance of this infernal sport. He was started by a blow; but soon broke through the files, and had almost reached the council-house, when a stout warrior knocked him down with a club. He was severely beaten in this position, and taken back again to custody.

Not yet satisfied,—for Butler was probably known as an old and powerful enemy,—they now marched him from village to village, to give all a spectacle of his sufferings. He run the gantlet thirteen times. He made various attempts to escape; and in one instance would have effected it, had he not been arrested by some savages, who were accidentally returning to the village, from which he was escaping. It was finally determined to burn him at the lower Sandusky, but an apparent accident changed his destiny.

In passing to the stake, the procession went by the cabin of Simon Girty, a renegade white man, who lived among the Indians, and had just returned from an unsuccessful expedition

against the whites on the frontiers of Pennsylvania. The wretch burned with disappointment and revenge; and hearing that there was a white man going to the torture, determined to wreak his vengeance on him. He found the unfortunate Butler, threw him to the ground, and began to beat him. Butler, who instantly recognized in Girty a former companion of his youth, made himself known to him. His savage heart relented. He raised him up, and promised to use his influence to save him. Girty had a council called, and induced the savages to give Butler up to him. He took the unfortunate man home, fed, and clothed him; and Butler began to recruit from his wounds and torture. But the relenting of the enemy in his favor was only momentary. After five days, they repented of their relaxation in his favor, reclaimed him, and marched him to Lower Sandusky, to be burned, according to their original purpose. By a surprising coincidence, he there met the Indian agent from Detroit, who, from motives of humanity, exerted his influence with the savages for his release, and took him with him to Detroit. Here the Governor humanely exerted himself to procure his release on 'parole.' He afterwards escaped, and by a

march of thirty days through the wilderness, reached Kentucky.*

The women and children of the white people have almost always, when captured, been spared, treated with comparative lenity, and finally redeemed from the possession of their savage masters. At other times, there have been the most extraordinary escapes from them, effected even by unassisted female ingenuity and courage.

It is related that, early in the last century, during a long war between France and Great Britain, in which most of the Northern tribes of the country, as well as the New England Provinces were involved, a small band of Canadian Indians, consisting of ten warriors attended by two of their wives, made an irruption into the back settlements of New England. They lurked for some time in the vicinity of one of the most exterior towns; and at length, after having killed and scalped several people, found means to take prisoner a woman who had with her a son of about twelve years of age. Being satisfied with the execution they had done, they retreated towards their native country, which lay at three hundred miles distance, and carried off with them their two captives.

* Flint's Geography.

The second night of their retreat, the woman formed a resolution worthy of the most intrepid hero. She thought she should be able to get from her hands the manacles by which they were confined, and determined if she did so to make a desperate effort for the recovery of her freedom. To this purpose, when she concluded that her conquerors were in their soundest sleep, she strove to slip the cords from her hands. In this she succeeded; and cautioning her son, whom they had suffered to go unbound, in a whisper, against being surprised at what she was about to do, she removed to a distance with great wariness the defensive weapons of the Indians, which lay by their sides.

Having done this, she put one of the tomahawks into the hands of the boy, bidding him to follow her example; and taking another herself, fell upon the sleeping Indians, several of whom she instantly despatched. But her attempt was nearly frustrated by the imbecility of her son, who, wanting both strength and resolution, made a feeble stroke at one of them, which only served to awaken him: she however sprung at the rising warrior, and before he could recover his arms, made him sink under the weight of her tomahawk; and this she alternately did to

all the rest, except one of the women, who awoke in time, and made her escape.

The heroine then took off the scalps of her vanquished enemies, and seizing also those they were carrying away with them as proofs of their success, she returned in triumph to the town from whence she had so lately been dragged, to the great astonishment of her neighbors, who could scarcely credit their senses, or the testimonies she bore of her amazonian intrepidity.

When the Indians are pursued, as they frequently are, in their retreat from the enemy's country, they make use of many stratagems to elude the search of their pursuers. They sometimes scatter leaves, sand, or dust over the prints of their feet; sometimes tread in each other's footsteps; and sometimes lift their feet so high, and tread so lightly, as not to make any impression on the ground. But if they find all these precautions unavailing, and that they are near being overtaken, they first despatch and scalp their prisoners, and then dividing, each endeavors to regain his native country by a different route. This prevents all farther pursuit; for their pursuers now despairing, either of gratifying their revenge, or

of releasing those of their friends who were made captives, return home.

If the successful party is so lucky as to make good their retreat unmolested, they hasten with the greatest expedition to reach a country where they may be perfectly secure; and that their wounded companions may not retard their flight, they carry them by turns in litters, or if it is in the winter-season draw them on sledges.

Their litters are made in a rude manner of the branches of trees. Their sledges consist of two small thin boards, about a foot wide when joined, and near six feet long. The fore-part is turned up, and the sides are bordered with small bands. The Indians draw these carriages with great ease, be they ever so much loaded, by means of a string which passes round the breast.*

We have spoken of Indian warfare as it is carried on by the tribes against each other. Their mode of fighting the whites has always been somewhat different from this, as might be expected from the different circumstances. They scarcely ever fail to make their attack upon a civilized force, when an opportunity occurs, just before day-break, at which period they

* Carver.

suppose the foes to be in their soundest sleep. Throughout the whole of the preceding night they will lie flat upon their faces, without stirring; and they make their approaches in the same posture, creeping upon their hands and feet till they are within bow-shot of those they have destined to destruction. On a signal given by the chief warrior, to which the whole body makes answer by the most hideous yells, they all start up, and discharging their arrows in the same instant, without giving their adversaries time to recover from the confusion into which they are thrown, pour in upon them with their war-clubs or tomahawks.

It is a principal maxim with all the tribes to do as much damage as possible with the least possible hazard to themselves. The celebrated defeat of General Braddock, near the Ohio River, is a fair specimen of this mode of warfare. His army consisted of about two thousand well disciplined and brave men. On his march through the wilderness towards Fort Du Quesne (now Pittsburgh) they were intercepted by a body of Indians in the French interest. So securely were the latter posted, that the English scarcely knew who were their enemies, or from what direction came the attacks. The

remnant of the army, under the command of Colonel (afterwards General) Washington, were finally compelled to retreat without even the satisfaction of seeing the Indian force, or making the least return of their terrible attack. The savages lost in all only two or three of their men wounded.

The more completely to illustrate the general character of Indian warfare with the whites, we introduce a passage from Flint's 'History of the Western States,' conveying a striking picture of what has always been the situation of our remote settlers during a contest with the savages on the borders of the country.

The family referred to in the present instance, resided on what is still called Coope's Run, in Bourbon County, Kentucky. The event occurred on the 11th of April, 1787, during a period of general war between the Americans and the North-Western tribes.

The family consisted of the mother, two sons of mature age, a widowed daughter with an infant in her arms, two grown daughters, and a daughter of ten years. They occupied a double cabin. In one division were the two grown daughters and the smaller girl; in the other, the remainder of the family. At evening

twilight, a knocking was heard at the door of the latter, asking in good English, and the customary phrase of the country, 'who keeps house?' As the sons were opening the door, the mother forbade, affirming that there were Indians there. The young men sprang to their guns. The Indians, being refused admittance, made an effort at the opposite door. They beat open the door of that room with a rail, and endeavored to take the three girls prisoners. The little girl escaped, and might have evaded danger in the darkness and the woods. But the forlorn child ran towards the other door, and cried for help. The brothers wished to fly to her relief, but the mother forbade her door to be opened. The merciless tomahawk soon hushed the cries of the distracted girl by murdering her. While a part of the Indians were despatching this child, and confining the other girl who was made prisoner, the third defended herself with a knife, which she was using at her loom, at the moment of attack. The heroism of this girl was unavailing. She killed one Indian, and was herself killed by another. The Indians in possession of one half the house, fired it. The persons confined in the other part of the cabin, had now to

choose between exposure to the flames, spreading towards them, or the tomahawks of the savages. The latter stationed themselves in the dark angles of the fence, while the bright glare of the flames would expose, as a clear mark, every person, who should escape. One son took charge of his aged and infirm mother; and the other of his widowed sister and her infant. The brothers separated with their charge, endeavoring to spring over the fence at different points. The mother was shot dead in attempting to cross. The other brother was killed, gallantly defending his sister. The widowed sister, her infant and one of the brothers escaped the massacre. These persons alarmed the settlement. Thirty men arrived next day, to witness the horrid spectacle, presented by this scene of murder and ruin. Snow had fallen, and it was easy to pursue the Indians by their trail. In the evening, they came upon the expiring body of the young woman, apparently murdered but a few moments before their arrival. The Indians had been premonished of their pursuit, by the barking of a dog that followed them; but two of their number were overtaken and killed,—who had apparently staid behind as victims to secure the escape of the rest.

CHAPTER III.

The DANCING of the Indians—Dancing-scene among the Delawares—The Assineboins—The Chippewas—The Missasagias—The Virginians—the Western Indians—The Fire, Begging, Pipe, Discovery, and War-dances—Religious dances—Indian music.

As the Indians dance for amusement, this subject might have been discussed under the head of SPORTS; but they dance also for exercise, and the relief of strong emotion; as a preparation for war, for hunting, for treating of peace, for the entertainment of strangers, for the display of activity and science, and for the propitiation of the favor of supposed Divinities. Those dances which have no object in view but amusement, are decidedly the most agreeable, because the least laborious and the best-humored.

The music used by the Delawares for these occasions, chiefly consisted of singing. They sang in chorus; first the men, and then the women. At times the latter joined in the general song, or repeated the strain just finished by the men,—the effect being much like that of two parties singing to each other in questions and answers. The singing always began

with one voice alone; others fell in successively until the general chorus commenced. What Mr. Heckewelder liked the least in this music, was the loud yell with which each song concluded at intervals of about fifteen minutes; and which, he says, reminded him strongly of a certain screech of the *cat-bird*. The only instrumental accompaniment was a kind of rude drum, which constantly beat time.

Henry describes a jovial dance at which he was present, among the Assineboins. It occurred after a grand hunt of buffaloes, from which the party returned home in high spirits, with their dog-sledges laden with meat.

On the evening of the hunting-day, the Chief of the village came to the tent of Henry, with whom he was well acquainted, bringing with him about twenty men, and as many women, who all seated themselves in the most orderly manner. A dance presently commenced, which lasted several hours. The men ranged themselves in a row on one side, and the women on the other; and each moved sidewise, first up, and then down the room. The Chief alone, who gave this entertainment, in compliment to Henry, took no part in the amusement, but sat gravely smoking his pipe as a spectator.

The sound of bells and other jingling materials, attached to the dresses of the women, enabled them to keep time. But they had also several instruments. There was a kind of '*tambourine*,'—probably the same with the Delaware drum; (the historian, Beverly, says that the Virginian Indians had such an instrument, 'made of a skin stretched over an earthen pot half full of water.') Others performed upon bunches of deers'-hoofs, fastened to the end of a stick. Then there was one fellow, with a piece of wood, three feet long, with notches cut on the edge; and who drew another stick, somewhat after the fashion of a fiddle-stick, along the notches, keeping time. Another had a gourd, half filled with rattling stones; and this was accompanied by people who shook a parcel of bones together.

This gourd was much used by the Southern, and in modern times by the Western tribes. It is also an occasional favorite with most of the Indians remaining to this day within the States, who, however, have generally learned to play more or less on some of the instruments of the whites. We have seen, among the Penobscots,* a fife, a fiddle, and a drum, all played

* At 'Indian Old-Town,' in Maine.

upon by Indians who had manufactured each his own instrument with his own hands. Henry states, that the Assineboin women *sang*; and that the sweetness of their voices exceeded every thing he had heard before. The singing of some of the Penobscot young women, on the occasion just referred to, though attended with what the whites call a *tone*, was surprisingly musical, and in perfectly exact time; and of nearly a hundred young scholars present there seemed to be scarcely any who had not at least tolerable voices and a correct sense of harmony. Some little fellows, only four or five years old, joined in the chorus with great spirit.

The Southern Indians danced more than those who lived in colder latitudes. In every village, every night, of the summer at least, they made a fire at some convenient place, around which all were welcome who chose to make merry, or to see others do so. The remote tribes of the North-West, on the other hand, dance less frequently, and with less spirit. The music of the Chippewyans, who occupy an immense tract of wilderness between sixty and sixty-five degrees of north latitude,—‘is so inharmonious, and their dancing so awk-

ward, that they might be supposed to be ashamed of both, as they very seldom practice either. They also shoot at marks, and play at other games; *but in fact they prefer sleeping to either; and the greater part of their time is passed in procuring food, and resting from the toil necessary to obtain it.** This remark would apply to some other tribes; but the Lake Indians dance with as much animation as need be. A frolic which occurred near the fort of the American Fur Company at Fond du Lac, in presence of a modern traveller,† may be considered a fair specimen of their proficiency in this laborious accomplishment.

The Americans at the fort were visited by a band of forty Chippewas from an island in the Lake. They came up from the landing two abreast, dancing along in short jumps to the time kept by two drummers, who marched in front, —these drums having rattles attached to them, and all singing an accompaniment to the drummer's sturdy thumping—‘a—ha—a—ha—ch—ch’—the *ch* aspirated with great force. At short intervals the whole company yelled in grand chorus, multiplying and swelling the sounds by clapping their hands over their mouths.

* Mc'Kenzie.

† Mc'Kenney.

On reaching the plain ground opposite the American quarters, the two lines were formed by this jumping motion into a circle, the two drummers alone keeping their places out of it. They then began to go round and round, with a kind of double short step; first with one foot, and then with the other. Having completed the circle several times, the drums gave a signal. Then they screamed and whooped, clapping their hands to their mouths; then stood still, breathing violently, to refresh themselves. After a short interval the labor recommenced; and thus it went on for a considerable time.

All the performers were painted: some black; others, one half red, and the other black,—the colors being separated by a nicely dividing line down the middle of the back and in front. Their heads were ornamented with feathers, and their hair plaited, with little bells and trinkets hanging from the plaits. Small looking-glasses swung at the girdle of some, with knives, and skins of birds; the ankles of one were bound round with pieces of fur; a fox-tail draggled at the heels of a second; a third wore leggins; a fourth, mocassins. The faces were painted in various figures and colors,—with red, green, yellow and black,—in lines, circles, stars and

points, or all these together. In the centre was placed a little boy, not over five years old, painted black. He kept time to the drum with an enormous head-dress of feathers; shouted the '*a—ha—eh*' with the others; and at intervals joined in the yelling of the grand chorus. When a pause occurred, some warrior occupied the time with an address to the company about his exploits, which they received with vociferous approbation.

The purpose of all this exercise, which the traveller calls a 'begging dance,' was to obtain presents from the Americans, chiefly of whiskey; and accordingly a quantity of this favorite beverage, mixed with a good proportion of water, and scented with tobacco, was provided for the company. Each person received a glass for himself, excepting only the children, who were directed to hand over their's to their *father*—so that he who brought forward the most children received the most whiskey. When the distribution was finished, they discharged a musket, raised a shout, ranged into double file, and went off yelling, dancing and jumping, in the best possible humor.

Among the strictly ceremonial dances of the Indians, should be mentioned the '*fire-dance*.'

Such a one was performed by the Canadian Mississagas, in presence of Charlevoix. It was commenced by a single warrior, nearly naked, in a cabin, to the music of the Indian drum, accompanied with a monotonous singing on the part of the spectators. This continued an hour, when five or six women came in, who, placing themselves side by side on the same line, as closely as possible to each other, with their arms hanging down, sang and danced in line,—that is, made some steps in cadence, forward and backward. This finished, the fire which gave the only light within the cabin, was extinguished. Then came in a savage, dancing along, with a lighted coal in his mouth,—the drum still beating. The women renewed their performance occasionally. The fire-man, who, spectre-like, could be distinguished only by the coal in his mouth, danced all the time.

Mr. Mc Kenney witnessed one of these fire-dances among the Chippewas. It took place in a large wigwam, in the evening, and a multitude of Indians of all sizes collected to see it, of whom thirty crowded into the building. The ceremony began with the drum's accustomed *thump—thump*—followed by occasional yells from the company. The fires of the lodge had

been nearly extinguished; but the traveller throwing pieces of birch-bark into them, now and then, the short-lived flame enabled him to discern the nakedness of the savages around him, and their eyes shining in all directions,—some from without, through cracks in the bark of the lodge.

A little girl now came forward, at one end of the lodge, and danced a few minutes in the common female fashion,—*never lifting the feet from the ground, but placing them close together, and keeping time to the thump of the drum by raising the heels, and whirling, first to the right, and then to the left.* Then an old woman stood up at the other end of the wigwam, and danced as long in the same manner. Then entered ten or twelve males, who, with bodies naked, and limbs violently agitated and bent, hopped round the lodge, up one side and down the other, yelling at intervals, and increasing the noise by clapping their hands on their mouths.

Suddenly, by throwing dirt and ashes on the fires, the remains of them were wholly extinguished, and for a moment every thing was still. Then the drums beat louder and louder, and the song broke out from a hundred mouths, within and without the lodge, until all ended in one loud and long-drawn savage yell. In the

midst of it, three or four of the company went round the circle, blowing fire from their mouths, sending out thousands of crackling sparks, and by means of them lighting up their own faces, till their distended cheeks had very much the appearance of pocket-lanterns.

The traveller took some pains to ascertain the secret of this fire-eating. As one of the performers approached the place where he sat, he rose, and looked into his mouth rather narrowly. He had, between his teeth, a reed, or some other hollow substance, which had been filled with powder, brimstone and other combustibles, and lighted; and thus he blew out its fiery contents. On discovering the traveller's purpose, he turned short round, and extinguished or concealed the fire,—probably by stopping the ends of his reed.

The same traveller speaks of a religious dance, called the *Wabana*, occasionally practised by the Chippewas in the way of a sacrifice, and generally followed up with a feast of dog's-flesh. It commenced, with the dancing of a woman and a girl. Then came in a tall fierce-looking Indian,—with a cap of skins on his head, and a mantle of the same,—blowing, staring round the lodge, and uttering at every

breath an *ch—ch—ch*;—when presently entered a younger Indian, and began a sort of wrestle with the first, as if to make him surrender something in his possession. Pretty soon the older man took up a rattle. The younger followed his example; and both of them marched round the lodge, half bent, stepping to the time, and beating it in the faces of the Indians who sat against the walls of the lodge. Then followed a speech, addressed (as the traveller supposed,) to the ‘*Evil Spirit*,’ the purpose being to appease him, and beg his compassion. The delivery of it was attended with such violent contortions, that the perspiration ran down the performer’s face in streams. Then he marched round the lodge again, followed by half a dozen others,—the drums sounding all the while. Some of the company sang, while others looked on and smoked. The ceremonies were kept up till sunrise; and a feast of dog-broth was then brought in, furnished in two kettles, holding about six gallons each. Several of the company were by this time exhausted, and had fallen asleep; but their seats were very willingly taken by *volunteers* who came in from the neighborhood, with their birch-bark bowls, to get a share of the dog-broth.

The 'pipe-dance' was formerly much practised at the negotiation of treaties of peace. This nearly resembled what has been already described as a 'begging-dance.'

The 'war-dances,' the most important of all, are of various descriptions. Sometimes they seem to be intended merely to give the warriors an opportunity of relating their exploits. This they are rather careful to do with some regard to modesty, for fear of giving offence to their comrades. Mr. Heckewelder mentions one conceited fellow who paid very dearly for his arrogant boasting at a war-dance. One of his Delaware rivals, who took offence at his observations, dealt him a blow which put an end at once to his bravadoes and his life.

But generally there is some special object in view,—perhaps, to recruit volunteers for a war-party,—to represent the plan of the campaign,—to give thanks for victory,—or to make merry with the torture of a captive; and the dances are named accordingly the recruiting-dance, the discovery-dance, the thanks-giving-dance, and the prisoner-dance.

The discovery-dance is a natural representation of all the principal incidents of war. Among the Canadian tribes, in Charlevoix's



time, one man performed it alone, or at least one at a time. 'At first,' says that historian 'he advances slowly into the midst of the place, where he remains for sometime motionless. Then he represents, one after another, the setting out of the warriors, the march, the encamping. He goes upon the *discovery*; [scout] he makes his approach; he stops, as to take breath; then all on a sudden he grows furious, and one would imagine he was going to kill every body; then he appears more calm, and takes one of the company as if he had made him a prisoner of war; he makes a show of knocking another man's brains out; he levels his gun at another; he sets up a running with all his might; then he stops and recovers himself; and finally, he recites all the brave actions he has performed during the war.

The following cut represents an ancient Virginian dance, performed, as the historian Beverly says, 'by a great number of people, the dancers themselves forming a ring, and moving round a circle of carved posts set up for the purpose, or round about a fire. Each has his rattle in his hand, or what other thing he fancies most, as his bows and arrows, or his tomahawk. Thus they proceed, dancing and singing, *with*



all the antic postures they can invent; and he's the bravest fellow that has the most prodigious gestures.' This description applies pretty well to the dancing of all tribes and times.—This *post* is very commonly used in the war-dance. Mr. Heckewelder states, of the Delawares,—and it is true of many others,—that, previous to their going out on a campaign, the war-dance is always performed round the painted post. It is the Indian mode of recruiting. Whoever joins in the dance is considered as having enlisted for the campaign, and is obliged to go out with the party.

And so, after returning from a successful expedition, a dance of *thanksgiving* is always performed, which partakes of the character of a religious ceremony. It is accompanied with singing and chorusses, in which the women join, though they take no part in the rest of the performance. At the end of every song, the *scalp-yell* is shouted as many times as there have been scalps taken from the enemy.

CHAPTER IV.

GOVERNMENT of the Indians—Nature of the Chief's authority—Anecdotes illustrating its exercise—Authority of the Council—Individual police—Anecdotes of the Hurons, Delawares and other tribes—Story of the 'CUT-NOSE'—Of 'POOR TOM,' the Choctaw—Of King POWHATAN.

Roger Williams says of the New England Indians, that their government was '*monarchical*.' His meaning is, that there was one ruler, or chief, in each tribe, who was generally considered as superior in authority to the rest, simply because they thought proper to obey his commands and respect his opinions. He was reputed a wiser man and a better warrior than the others: and whenever he ceased to be either, or when his countrymen imagined that he did so, they from that time ceased to regard him as chief; and some other individual was, by general consent, and often with some ceremonies of election, appointed in his stead. Thus the government was in fact, completely *democratical*.

And yet, the authority of the Head-Chief, so long as he remained such, was nearly as absolute as that of a European '*monarch*.' In some respects it was more so. There were

no written laws to control his conduct; and the same good sense, courage and influence which raised him to the dignity of chief, were almost always sufficient to give to his commands all the dignity and effect of an imperial decree.

For the better understanding of the Indian government, we may compare it with our own. The *Council* answered to our *Congress*,—the chief difference in principle, being, that the former was summoned together and managed, according to custom, and by common consent, and not according to a written constitution. Instead of members being elected to attend it, it was the practice as well as the right of all the members of a tribe or nation to attend in person, at least occasionally; and these were not often so numerous as to prevent a large part of them being actually present.

The business of these councils, was, to determine upon the policy of the tribes, in all cases of importance and difficulty. They made no *laws*, strictly speaking, because time immemorial had made well-known *usages* to serve the same purpose; but they discussed and decided questions of offences against these usages by other tribes,—together with the proper means of punishing such offences,—and, in

fact, every other matter of public interest. If, for instance, the chief knew of an insult or an injury received from a neighboring tribe, he called a *Council*,—a town-meeting of all his wise men, or perhaps all his warriors,—to decide whether or not they should forthwith go to war, or send a messenger to demand satisfaction for the injustice, or submit to it in silence. If they concluded to make war, there then came up further questions, perhaps, how and when they should send out an expedition; whether the head-chief should command it in person, or select some other person, or leave one to be selected by those warriors who should volunteer to make up the war-party; whether they should give the enemy notice of their intention, or endeavor to fall upon his villages unawares; and whether, in either of these cases, they should begin single-handed, or send messengers, with a war-belt or other martial emblem, to invite some other tribe or town to make common cause with them.

In the case of the expedition against the Sioux of the Mississippi, mentioned by Tanner, which consisted of one thousand and four hundred warriors, the number was made up by an alliance of three or four considerable tribes. Each of these, alone, was unequal to the task.

of fighting the Sioux, (who are a numerous and warlike people,) and they therefore made an arrangement, by means of messengers sent from one council to another, to collect a party of volunteers for the campaign at a certain convenient place on the proposed route,—which, in this instance, was a well-known ridge of land called ‘Turtle Mountain.’

Such is the Council, as a whole. The influence of any particular person who attends, depends on his eloquence in some measure, and also upon the general opinion entertained of his wisdom, experience, and courage.

Both the judging and punishing of crimes is generally committed to the Head-Chief, with no other restraint than that of public opinion and common usage. Roger Williams states, that the New England Sachem was accustomed ‘either to beate, or whip, or put to death with his owne hand, to which the common sort most quietly submit; though sometimes the Sachem sends a secret executioner, one of his chiefest warriors, to fetch off a head, by some unexpected blow of a hatchet.’

The custom was the same among the Virginian Indians. Beverly relates, that, on one occasion, when a ‘Werowance,’ or Chief, was

holding a conference on some important subject with the English, he was *interrupted*, in speaking, by one of his own attendants. This was a grievous offence against the solemn decorum of an Indian council. He therefore instantly took his tomahawk from his girdle, and split the fellow's head at a single blow. As he fell dead before him, he commanded some of his men to carry him out, and then proceeded with his speech as unconcernedly as if nothing had happened.

This was an offence of which the punishment seemed to belong peculiarly to the Chief of the tribe. There are many crimes, however, committed against private persons, which those persons themselves almost always punish with their own hands—it being the business of the tribe, or the Head-Chief, in such cases, only to see that the thing is done according to custom, and not carried too far.

Among some of the Indians, even theft has been punished in this manner. A French Missionary, who lived with the Canadian Hurons, once saw a young warrior cruelly beating a young woman with a club. He ran up to him, to prevent her being killed, and asked him what was the occasion of his violence. ‘She

is my *sister*,' replied the Huron, 'and she has been guilty of *stealing*. I must expiate, by her death, the horrid disgrace she has brought upon me and my family.'

Murder is invariably punished by the relations of the deceased victims; and they consider it a point of honor not to omit revenging themselves on the offender, unless he should be able to satisfy them in some other way than by the sacrifice of his own life. He may indeed escape by the plea of drunkenness, (to which most of the murders among the modern Indians are owing) for this they consider a sufficient excuse for any crime. No doubt the unhappy consequence of this notion is, that when one man has a design against another, he either makes himself drunk, or counterfeits drunkenness, in such a manner as to gratify his malice with impunity.

With much better ideas of moral propriety the Indians do not punish a man, or permit him to be punished, for what they consider an *accidental* offence. Mr. Heckewelder mentions, that, while among the Delawares, he knew of an Indian who went early one morning into the wigwam of another, while he was yet a-bed, to request the loan of his gun for a morning hunt,

—his own being out of repair. The owner readily consented, and said: ‘as my gun is not loaded, you will have to take a few balls out of the pouch!’ In taking the gun down, it, however, by some accident went off, and lodged the contents in the owner’s head, who was still lying on the bed, and now expired. The gun, it appeared, was loaded, though unknown to him, and the lock left in such a condition that it went off at a touch. A cry was heard from all sides in the house; ‘Oh! the *accident!*’ for such it was always considered to have been, and as such it was treated.

In another instance, a Delaware hunter went out to kill a bear, some of those animals having been seen in the neighborhood. In an obscure part of a wood, he saw at a distance something black moving, which he took for a bear, the whole of the animal not being visible to him; he fired, and found he had shot a black horse. Having discovered the mistake, he informed the owner of what had happened, expressing at the same time his regret that he was not possessed of a single horse, with which he could replace the one he had shot. ‘What!’ replied the Indian whose horse had been killed, ‘do you think I would accept a horse from you, though

you had one to give, after you have satisfied me that you killed mine *by accident*? No, indeed! for the same misfortune might also happen to me.'

A similar anecdote is told of an old Delaware, who, having gone out to shoot turkeys, mistook a black hog in the bushes for one of those birds, and shot him. Finding out by inquiry to whom the hog belonged, he informed the owner of the mistake he had made, offering to pay for the hog; which the other, however, not only would not accept of, but having brought the meat in, gave him a leg of the animal. It seems, he thought that the unfortunate man, as well on account of his disappointment in not feasting on turkey as he expected soon to do when he shot the hog, as for his honesty in giving information of the act, was *entitled* to a share of what he had killed.*

Mr. Tanner relates an instance which occurred, a few years ago, among a tribe of North-Western Indians, of a murder going unrevengeed on account of the relations of the deceased thinking it better to lose their satisfaction for the offence, than to incur the hazard of exasperating the numerous friends of the murderer.

* Historical Account.

The name of the latter was Wa-me-gon-a-biew; and that of the murdered man, Ke-zha-zhoons. When the body of the deceased was ready to be buried by his friends, Wa-me-gon-a-biew went away, alone, a considerable distance, and dug a grave wide and deep enough for two men. The body was brought, and lowered down. Wa-me-gon-a-biew then stripped off most of his clothes, and sitting down naked at the head of the grave, drew his knife, and offered the handle to the nearest male relative of the deceased. 'My friend!' said he, 'I have killed your brother. You see I have made a grave wide enough for both of us. I am now ready and willing to sleep with him.'

The first, and second, and eventually all the friends of the murdered young man, successively refused the knife. Finding at length that none of the male relations of Ke-zha-zhoons were disposed to undertake the revenge of his murder, Wa-me-gon-a-biew rose and said to them:— 'Trouble me no more, then, about this business, now or hereafter. I shall do again as I have done, if any of you venture to give me the same provocation.'

This '*provocation*,' it seems, was, that Ke-zha-zhoons, had called him a '*cut-nose*'—proba-

bly alluding to some mutilation of his face by a wound received in war.

There are still other modes by which the criminal sometimes succeeds in escaping the punishment of his crime. If the relatives happen to be all females, the probabilities of escape are the more in his favor, inasmuch as the women generally think less than the warriors do of the point of honor implied in *revenging* the crime. It also occurs, sometimes, that a woman, especially if she be a widow,—perhaps feeble and destitute,—may be glad to make up the loss of her murdered husband or son by *adopting* the offender as her servant. A remarkable instance of this kind took place, in 1793, at an Indian village called La Chine, on the River St. Lawrence, about nine miles above Montreal.

In this village, at the time referred to, were two Indians of considerable note; the one for his great strength and activity, and the other for his stature, for he was at least six feet and four inches in height. These two meeting each other one day in presence of a third, the tall man made use of some insulting language to the other. He called him a coward, and so provoked him by several expressions equally abu-

sive, that the insulted savage altogether lost the command of his temper. ‘You have called me a coward, truly,’ he said, at length—‘but you never will do it again;’ and he stabbed him through the body with a knife, at the same moment, so that he dropped dead at his side.

The alarm was immediately spread through the village, and a crowd of Indians assembled. The murderer made no attempt to fly. He heard the people crying—‘Kill him! Kill him!’—but, saying not a word, nor moving a step, he seated himself on the ground near the dead body, and calmly awaited the result. Still,—whether they feared his strength, or respected his courage too much to take his life,—no one came forward to lay hands on him. He even placed his head and body in a proper posture for receiving the stroke of the tomahawk; but the Indians who had gathered around him, only tarried to take away the body of the deceased, and then left him alone.

Not meeting here with the treatment he expected, he rose from this place, went to a more public part of the village, and there lay down on the ground in the hope of being the sooner despatched; but the spectators, after viewing him, all retired again. Sensible that his life

was justly forfeited, and anxious to be relieved from a state of suspense, he took the resolution to go to the mother of the deceased, an aged widow, whom he addressed in these words: ‘Woman, I have killed thy son; he had insulted me, it is true; but still he was thine, and his life was valuable to thee. I, therefore, now surrender myself up to thy will. Direct as thou wilt have it, and relieve me speedily from misery.’

To which the woman answered: ‘Thou hast, indeed, killed my son who was dear to me, and the only supporter I had in my old age. One life is already lost, but to take thine on that account, cannot be of any comfort to me, nor better my situation. Thou hast, however, a son, whom if thou wilt give me in the place of my son whom thou hast slain, all shall be wiped away.’

The murderer then replied: ‘Mother, my son is yet but a child, ten years old, and can be of no service to thee, but rather a trouble and charge; but here am I, truly capable of supporting and maintaining thee: if thou wilt receive me as thy son, nothing shall be wanting on my part to make thee comfortable while thou livest.’

The woman, approving of the proposal, forth-

with adopted him as her son, and took the whole family to her house.

We shall now relate, in further illustration of the customs and feelings already spoken of in this chapter, a story related of two Choctaws, by a respectable American lady who was herself an eye-witness of the scene she describes.*

‘Jenny,’ as the whites called her, was the wife of a Choctaw, who, about thirty years ago, murdered an Indian of his own tribe; and then fled over the Mississippi into Louisiana, where, however, he was overtaken and killed by his pursuers. Jenny, with four or five small children, of whom the eldest was called by the whites ‘Tom,’—in his own language, Hocktanlubbee,—afterwards moved into a tribe in the neighborhood of St. Francisville. Here, among other new acquaintances, she met with a wealthy American lady, a widow, who had compassion upon her, and often relieved her wants.

After she had lived here a long time, Tom, who was now twenty-five years old, unfortunately fell into some dispute with an old Indian, of which the result was, that he murdered him on the spot. Of course his own life was demanded in satisfaction, and a day was soon ap-

* See Morse’s Report on Indian Affairs: 1822.

pointed for inflicting public punishment of his crime. A large assembly was collected on that occasion, including all the friends and relatives both of the murderer and the murdered, and every thing was now ready for the expected execution of Tom, who silently awaited his fate in the midst of the gazing throng. The executioners and the instruments of death were beside him.

At this moment, his poor old mother, Jenny, was seen pressing eagerly through the crowd. She came forward, and addressed herself to the relations of the deceased, and to the company at large. ‘Poor Tom is young,’ she said, ‘he has a wife, children, brothers, sisters, all dependent on him for subsistence. As for me, I have only a few days at most, and can do but little more for my family.’ ‘Nor is this *just*,’ she added, turning to the chiefs who were present; ‘it is a shame to take a new garment (meaning, the life of a young person) for an old one.’

Whether the company agreed with her in this view of the matter, or whether the relations of the deceased were disposed to be satisfied with her own sacrifice, her offer was accepted, and a few hours allowed her to prepare for

death. In this interval she repaired to the house of her kind friend, the American lady, which was not very distant, for the purpose of seeing her for the last time. The lady was all this time wholly ignorant of what had been going on in the Indian village. Nor did Jenny say any thing about the affair. She had come, she said, to beg a coffin and a winding-sheet for her son. ‘When the sun has reached its height,’ she added, pointing upwards, ‘poor Tom must die.’ The lady did all she could to comfort her, and gave her what she requested, without suspecting the arrangement she had made to save the criminal’s life. ‘But how long must the coffin be?’ she inquired. ‘*Oh! make them to suit my size,*’ Jenny replied, ‘*and they will answer very well for Tom.*’

Soon after she had left the lady’s house, a messenger arrived in haste from the camp, and informed her that Jenny was about being executed by the Indians. She now hastened to reach the place in time to save the doomed victim; but Jenny, the moment she saw her carriage coming, at a distance, doubtless imagining, what was her object, standing by her grave, caught the muzzle of the gun, the prepared instrument of her death, and pointing it

to her heart, entreated the executioner immediately to do his duty. He obeyed, and she fell dead.

During five years after this, Tom was treated with sneers and contempt by the friends of the old man whom he had murdered. They said to him: '*You coward; let your mother die for you! You afraid to die, coward.*' Tom could not endure all this. Some time afterwards, he met a son of the old man whom he had murdered, on the bank of the Mississippi, ten miles from his home, and for some cause unknown, (probably he had been his principal tormentor,) plunged his knife into him, giving him a mortal wound. He returned home with indications of triumph, brandishing his bloody knife, and, without waiting for inquiry, confessed what he had done. He told his Indian friends, that he would not live to be called a *coward*. 'I have been told,' he said, 'that I fear to die. Now you shall see, that I can die like a man.' A wealthy planter, whose house he passed, he invited to witness how he could die. This was on the Sabbath. Twelve o'clock, Monday, was the hour which he appointed for this self-immolation.

Here, says our informant, a scene was pre-

sented which baffles description. As she approached the place, Tom was walking forward and back again, still keeping in his hand the bloody knife, which he seemed to consider, as the duellist does his sword or pistol, his badge of honor. With all his efforts to conceal it, he discovered marks of an agitated mind. The sad group present, consisted of about ten men, and as many females; the latter, with sorrowful countenances, were employed in making an over-shirt for Tom's burial. The men, all except two brothers of Tom, were present, smoking their pipes, with apparent unconcern. Several times Tom examined his gun, and remained silent. His grave had been dug the day before, and he had laid himself down in it, to see if it suited as to length and breadth.

When the shirt was completed, and handed to him, he immediately put it over another garment, the only one he had on; drew a pair of calico sleeves on his arms; tied two black silk handkerchiefs round each shoulder, crossed on the breast, and wrapped a third about his head. His long hair was tied with a blue ribbon, and he had a yard or two on each arm, above the elbow. The pipe of peace went round thrice. The old Chief's wife then arose

retired into the bushes, and sang the *death-song*, in words, rendered in English, ‘*Time is done; Death approaches.*’

This done, Tom went round and shook hands with every person present. While he held the hand of one of his neighbors, a white man, he said to him, ‘farewell; you see me no more in this world. When you die, you see me.’ His neighbor said, ‘Tom, where are you going?’ ‘I am going to mother,’ said Tom. ‘Where is your mother?’ ‘In a good place.’ ‘But Tom, will you not wait? Perhaps the friends of the young man you killed, will accept of a ransom. We will do what we can to save you.’ Tom replied, ‘No, I will die.’

No one had demanded his death; for all who were interested, and would have considered their honor and duty concerned in it, resided at the distance of forty or fifty miles. The death-song was repeated, as was the shaking of hands. Both were again repeated, the third and last time. Immediately after, Tom stepped up to his wife, a young woman of eighteen, with an infant in her arms, and another little child, two or three years old, standing by her side, and presented to her the bloody knife,

which till now he had kept in his hand. She averted her face to conceal a falling tear; but recovering herself, turned, and took it with a faint, forced smile. His sister was sitting by the side of his wife, so wholly absorbed in grief, as to be apparently insensible to what was passing; her eyes vacant, fixed on some distant object. It is a perfect picture of wo.

His pipe he gave to a young brother, who struggled hard to conceal his emotions. He then drank a little whiskey and water, dashed the bottle on the ground, sung a few words in the Choctaw language, and with a jumping, dancing step, hurried to his grave. His gun was so fixed, by the aid of a young sapling, as to enable him to take his own life. No one, he had declared, should take it from him. These preparations and ceremonies being now completed, he gave the necessary touch to the apparatus; the gun was discharged, and its contents passed through his heart. He instantly fell dead to the earth. The females sprang to the lifeless body. Some held his head; others his hands, and feet; and others knelt at his side. He had charged them to show no signs of grief while he lived, lest it should shake his resolution. As far as possible, they

had obeyed. Their grief was restrained, till he was dead. It now burst forth in a torrent, and their shrieks and lamentations were loud and undissembled.*

These affecting details of one of the most singular scenes recorded in modern history, simple as they are, can hardly fail to touch the sympathies of every generous heart in behalf of the poor children of nature. No less manifest are their fine sensibilities, and capacities for social and christian life, than even the wretched heathenism which but too generally has distinguished the race.

Whenever, in modern times, the Indians have committed the crime of murder upon American citizens, they have generally submitted without hesitation to the punishment required by American laws. Such is the force of education and custom: and besides, they well know that their tribes would be very sure to apprehend them, and give them up to justice, should they decline or delay doing it themselves. The chiefs, especially, pride themselves on adhering to immemorial usage in this respect.

In the year 1785, a vagabond Indian of the Delaware nation murdered a white man, one

* Morse,

Mr. Evans, at Pittsburgh. When, after a confinement of several months, his trial was about coming on, the Delaware chiefs were politely invited to be present at the proceedings, and see how the trial would be conducted, and also, if they chose, to speak in behalf of the accused. All of them, however, instead of coming, as wished for, sent to the civil officers of that place the following laconic answer: 'Brethren! You inform us that N. N. who murdered one of your men at Pittsburgh, is shortly to be tried by the laws of your country, at which trial you request that some of us may be present! Brethren! knowing N. N. to have been always a very bad man, we do not wish to see him! We, therefore, advise you to try him by your laws, and to hang him, so that he may never return to us again.'

The chiefs of the Southern tribes were more absolute in their authority than those of the Northern. Their tribes were more numerous; and they had more means of enforcing their commands. POWHATAN, who was chief ruler over thirty different tribes in Virginia, when the English made the first settlement at Jamestown in 1607, was a monarch of more parade and state than any other in the country.

Generally, where several tribes unite with each other under one common chief, as was often the case formerly, the union is voluntary, like that of the individuals of each separate tribe. But Powhatan is said to have ruled over his thirty tribes by force of conquest, and to have regarded them strictly as *subjects*. All the 'Werowances' paid him a yearly tribute of furs, beads, copper, deer, turkeys, corn or other appointed articles,—each of them in his turn collecting a larger tribute of the same kind in the same way from his own tribe.

Powhatan had three or four places of residence,—chosen with a view to hunting, fishing, and other privileges,—at each of which he had a royal dwelling. This was a house made of poles and bushes, much like those used by the common Indians, but quite wide and high, and not far from one hundred feet in length. Thus they were large enough to accommodate the guard which attended him, as well as his wives, servants and visitors.

This guard consisted, at least in war-time, of forty or more of his tallest subjects. Every night, four of them were stationed, as sentinels, at the four corners of the house. At every half hour, one of the body-guard shouted to each

of the four, for the purpose of ascertaining their wakefulness. If either sentinel failed to answer the signal, for whatever reason, he was very sure to receive a severe beating, forthwith, from an officer of the guard.

Such is the energy with which an Indian chieftain generally inflicts punishment, and such the fortitude with which his subjects, or countrymen, submit to it. The chief is careful, on one hand, to go no farther than custom will sanction; and the culprit, on the other, is well aware that the disgrace of running away from punishment would be no less than the difficulty of finally escaping it.

One of Powhatan's places of residence, for the summer, was called Orapakes. A mile from the little village which here surrounded his dwelling, in a thicket of woods, was another house, more stoutly constructed and fortified, in which were kept treasures of all sorts. There were the skins, metal, and beads which he received as tribute. There also was his store of red paint for ointment, his bows and arrows, targets and clubs. This house was fifty yards in length, and none but priests were permitted to enter it,—probably that the people might be led to regard it as a sacred place.

At the four corners were set up four rudely graven images of wood; one representing a sort of dragon, another a bear, the third a leopard, and the fourth a giant-like man.

Powhatan always had a multitude of wives about him. One usually sat at his right hand, and another at his left; or, when he lay down, one at his feet, and another at his head. When he dined or supped, one of them, both before and after the meal, brought him a wooden platter full of water, to wash his hands; and a second, a bunch of feathers, to serve the purpose of a towel,—which, after being used, were dried, to be used again. When he was weary of these women, he gave them away to his werowances, or his best warriors.

CHAPTER V.

Indian GOVERNMENT, continued—Customs of the Council, ancient and modern—Practises observed by the Mohawks—Sketch of a Council at Detroit—Indian oratory—Account of the COUNCIL of FOND DU LAC, in 1826.

As we have frequently referred to the Indian council, which may indeed be called the source of their whole government, it may be proper to give a somewhat particular account of the modes of doing business commonly practised on these occasions both in ancient and modern times.

And first, of those councils which are exclusively *Indian*,—whether composed of the members of a single tribe only, or of deputies from several tribes, collected for common consultation. These have been generally held in a large wigwam or lodge, made and kept expressly for that purpose, and known by the name of the *Council-House*; as the fire, usually built in the centre of the floor or ground, was known by that of the *Council-Fire*. A great reverence has been universally cherished by the Indians for both.

Under this shelter, then, and around this fire,

all who chose to attend the council seated themselves, without much regard to any other order than the common custom of forming a circle or semi-circle, as the case might be. Some lay, or leaned, one way, and some another; so that, indeed, a stranger might suppose many of them to be inattentive to what was going on. But nothing could be farther from the truth than this. The moment a wise man, (as they frequently call the *aged*,) or a chief arose, to express his opinion on the subject-matter of the council, all was silence and perfect order throughout the house; and from that moment, until he ceased to speak, and sat down again, not a man moved from his place, and no sound was heard excepting now and then a peculiar kind of interjectional noise of assent or approbation—*oah—eh—hugh*—when the speaker uttered some sentiment which seemed to deserve such notice. The orator always stood erect in addressing the assembly, and his speech was generally brief, and directly to the point. When he had done, the opinion of the council upon his sentiments, if favorable, was rarely expressed in more words than ‘*It is well!*’ or ‘*It is good!*’ Another then rose; and so they succeeded each other, until every one who wished had an opportunity of

making himself heard, although none often spoke but those whose age or services entitled them to more than common respect.

The strictness with which the grave decorum of the council is sustained, may appear from an anecdote relating to this subject. In the winter of 1785-6, an Indian council was summoned by the English commandant of the Fort of Detroit, (Michigan,) for the purpose of witnessing the trial of two young Chippewas who had committed several daring murders upon the whites in that vicinity. They were proved guilty, and the commandant had just pronounced the sentence of death upon them, when the younger of the two, (who was the son of the other,) sprang from his seat, forced his way out at the door, and there attempted to break through the guard stationed outside by the aid of a knife which he had concealed under his blanket. He did not succeed; but in the course of the struggle which ensued, was stabbed, and fell.

All this noisy affair of course occasioned great commotion without the house, and not a little fear and uneasiness within. But during the whole time not one of the Chippewa chieftains either moved from his seat, or looked around, or even at each other. They remained sitting

in precisely the same posture as before, and smoking their pipes as composedly as if all were asleep.

A council is generally called together by the Head-Chief. The occasions for calling it as various as can arise from the public affairs of the tribe. Perhaps he has received a message from some other tribe,—generally in the shape of a Pipe of Peace, a wampum war-belt, or some other customary symbol. This is considered a formal communication, the meaning of which may be relied upon. Any flying *rumor* to the same effect which may chance to reach the ears of the Chief ever so long before, he considers nothing of public concern. It is only the '*song of a bird which has flown by.*' But when the pipe or the belt comes,—together, perhaps, with a quantity of tobacco, to be smoked in sign of alliance or peace,—then the council is summoned forthwith, and the Chief announces what '*he has heard.*' If the council, after debate, refuse to smoke the pipe, or receive the belt,—as the case may be,—it amounts to a refusal of the invitation of the other tribe; and it is the business of the Chief to communicate their decision, whatever it may be.

Among the Five Nations of New York, and

some other tribes, the following mode of remembering what was said by the speakers on either side, at a conference between two tribes, was commonly observed. The Speaker made a pause at the close of every few sentences, whether to present a wampum-belt in confirmation of what he uttered, or take breath. The Head-Chief of the other party took that occasion to hand a small stick to one of his underchiefs who sat beside him, which was as much as to say—‘*You* are to remember that part of his speech;—we depend upon you for that.’ Thus, at the close of each important article or sentiment in the speech, some one of the party addressed was charged with the duty of recollecting it. When it was all attended to in this manner, the council broke up until afternoon, or for the rest of the day, so as to give the tribe addressed an opportunity of determining in private upon a suitable reply. In this secret conference different persons were charged, in the same manner as before, to recollect each one the answer agreed upon to be made to some particular part of that day’s address, by an orator selected for that purpose. When the latter, therefore, came to deliver the result of their discussions, at the public council, if he

mistated or forgot any part of his business, he was immediately prompted by one of these men with the stick, who, of course, paid the closest attention to the proceedings.

We shall close this chapter with some account of a *modern* council between the Indians and the whites. As a fair specimen, may be selected the one which took place in August, 1826, at the establishment of the American Fur Company on the shores of Fond du Lac, at the mouth of the River St. Louis, between large numbers of the Chippewas of that region on one hand, and commissioners appointed by the American Government to treat with them, on the other. It will be observed, that assemblies of this kind, which occur frequently on the frontiers, differ much from the genuine Indian council, and especially in the fact, that the mode of conducting them, and the business done at them, are both chiefly under the management of the commissioners alone.

In the present instance, the arbor used for this purpose, was erected on the shores of the Lake. From day to day, until the appointed time arrived, one band of Indians after another came in, some of them from a distance of hundreds of miles. Generally, as they landed,

or during the evening after their arrival, they performed a *Pipe-Dance*, such as we have heretofore described, accompanied with singing and drumming in abundance.

By different bands it was performed with many curious variations. Some rounded their bodies in front like a bow, with their arms pinioned down close to their sides,—their elbows projecting just behind their hips, while their arms, making a sharp angle at the elbow, rose up with the hands on a line with the neck.—Each brandished a pipe and a rattle. Then, with their knees bent forward, the whole company would jump or hop to the time of the drum; or, first with one foot, and then with the other, stamp pompously round the circle.*

The council began at twelve o'clock on the 2d of August, about three hundred and fifty chiefs, head-men and warriors of the Chippewas being on the spot, besides a large number of women and children, of every age, who were not allowed to come in. The two Commissioners, Governor Cass and Colonel Mc'Kenney, had a seat reserved for themselves at one end of the arbor; the chiefs and warriors occupied

* See Mc'Kenney's 'Tour to the Lakes,' from which we borrow this whole account.



all the residue of the building. The peace-pipe was smoked alternately by the two parties, in sign of friendship; the Governor made an address to the Indians, respecting the objects of calling the council; and the assembly was then adjourned to the next day, to give them an opportunity of preparing their reply.

At eleven o'clock of the 3d, three guns being fired as a signal, the council was again opened with the ceremony of smoking. Several of the chiefs arose, and made speeches in reply to the Governor's. Among the rest was a Squaw, about seventy years of age, named O-CAN-GEE-WACK, who presented herself and was admitted in the right of her husband.

‘My Fathers!’—said she to the Commissioners—‘I am sent here by my husband. His eyes are shut [he was blind] but his mouth and ears are still open. He has long wished to see the Americans. He hopes now, Fathers, to find something in his cabin. He has held you a long time by the hand; [meaning, he had been friendly.] He still holds you by the hand. He is poor. His blanket is old and worn out, like the one you see, [holding up her own blanket.] But he now thinks he sees a better one.’

At one o'clock, the council adjourned again, until three of the afternoon, the chiefs not having yet completed their speeches. It reassembled at that hour, and continued till sunset, when it was adjourned to Saturday, the 5th of the month.

On that day it opened at ten o'clock, with the usual ceremony. A treaty had been meanwhile prepared, which was now read and explained to the chiefs. They agreed to it, and placed their signatures at the bottom; that is, touched the nib of a pen to a mark made for their name, which they acknowledged to be their signature.

In the afternoon they met again, and also two or three times afterwards. Other speeches were made on both sides; American medals were given to a number of the young warriors; and finally, they were directed to come for the last time, with their women and children, to receive the long expected presents designed for them by the American Government. Meanwhile, *this* part of the assembled multitude had been gratified, out of council, by the Commissioners' throwing out among them a variety of little trinkets and gewgaws suited to the Indian taste, to be scrambled for by the most active.

Such was the eagerness with which they entered into this struggle, that they clambered up the sides, and over the eaves of the houses, in pursuit of a few trifles which had fallen upon the roofs; and raced and tumbled about at that height, with as much coolness as if they were on the ground. Others chased each other into the water, with the same object in view.

All the demands of the Commissioners having been satisfactorily answered by the chiefs in council, another meeting took place, at the signal of three guns, for the distribution of presents. Men, women, children, and dogs flocked in together—to the number of about seven hundred. All sorts and sizes were present. There was the infant, fastened, in its frame or cradle, to its mother's back; the little Indian boy, with his shaggy dress of racoon skins, and looking, himself, except his face, (says Mr. Mc'Kenney) for all the world, like one of those animals reared on his hind feet; and there was the stately and valient WA-EM-BOESII-KAA, a famous chieftain from Sandy Lake, with his calumet and tobacco-pouch, an ornament of horse-hair about his neck, and a head-dress of the feathers of the duck's breast and of wood-peckers' bills. The whole as-

sembly seated themselves in an orderly manner upon the ground; and the presents were placed in a heap together in the vacant square fronting the Commissioners' table.

Among the rest there were about twelve hundred knives, of all sizes, a large number of which were carried round by the American interpreters and agents, and distributed to all the men, women and youth. Then two kegs of tobacco were broken up, and the twists separated, and a twist given to every man and woman. Then a handkerchief, calico for a shirt apiece, cloth for leggins, cloth for petticoats for the women, blankets, and then flints for the men, and ribands for the women, were distributed with a liberal hand. A quantity of fish-hooks was also sent round,—an important article in the stores of the Lake Indians.—

‘I noticed,’ says Mr. M’Kenney, ‘the effect each gift had on the expecting multitude. New joy would sparkle in every eye. The little naked children would run about almost frantic; the squaws would utter their exclamatory ‘*neau*,’ which is peculiar to the women; and the boys and girls clap their hands and toss themselves about, whilst the old men smoked away like steam-engines. And as the dispensers of these

gifts would go round, every eye would follow them, and with an imploring look, when every now and then a fear would manifest itself, lest they who indulged it might be passed.'

But an important part of the presents still remained to be given out, for the distribution of which the whole multitude was called together for the last time. The Indians, during the whole period of their visit, had been supplied, every day, with a pound of pork and a pound of flour for each person. And this was great feasting for them. The chiefs said 'they had never before known what it was to live!' At the signal of three guns, they were now seen rushing in from all quarters—across the river from the island,—down the hill-sides, in the rear,—along the picket-fences,—and some from the buildings, where they had been 'to watch over the refuse of the tables, and pick up what they could find.'

The Commissioners, soon finding them all on the ground, but crowding and jostling each other in a good deal of noisy confusion, expressed a wish that all the women who had children should seat themselves together. Here was a sight worth seeing. There were at least two hundred naked children,—some tied with strings,

and others with cedar-roots, to the fastenings of their mothers' petticoats,—about fifty of them at their mothers' breasts,—and fifty more crying lustily, while the women endeavored in vain to hush them into something like silence; and all this tumult heightened by the violent yelping of the Indian dogs which had been left, confined, upon the neighboring island.

A partial quiet being at length secured, the men, and the women who had no children, inclining one way, left the mothers, with their charges, to take such places as were pointed out for them. It was determined to deal out, for each of these two hundred children, calico enough to make them a whole shirt,—more than most of their parents had seen at any one time during their whole lives.

And now, again, came on a scene of general excitement. Such a present! The women cried *neau!*—twenty of them at a time; and all sorts of antics were cut by all the little fellows who could run at all, or even stand. 'Some, on receiving the calico, would tie it round their necks, and gallop round their mothers with it, and getting it tangled round their legs, fall down, and kick, and cry; when their mothers would reach after them, and taking them by

their feet, or their arms, pull them in, brush off the dirt, and quiet them, when they would dance about again, delighted with the appearance of the red and white calico.'

After this, some jewelry was distributed. Every woman, and most of the children, received a ring, with a stone set in it, and a glass-cross; while gorgets and silver broaches, together with a quantity of powder, lead and shot, were distributed to the chiefs and warriors.

In the afternoon the bands were directed to send for their *flour* and *pork*. The former was in bags, and the latter in half-barrels. Every Indian being promised *as much as he could carry* of either, they soon assembled at the door of the store-house, with straps of deer-skin in their hands. These they would fasten about a pork-barrel or a flour-bag, and lifting it upon their backs, pass them round their foreheads, and stagger off to their canoes at the water's edge. Even the old woman, O-can-gee-wack, loaded herself in this style, and walked off, smiling as she went, apparently unconscious alike of her burden of years and of pork.

On the morning of August 9th, — a fine,

calm summer-day—the Commissioners and their party having made every preparation for leaving the Establishment, and pursuing their journey by water, a barrel of *whiskey* was set in the square at sun-rise. The Indians—always but too eager to indulge a fatal appetite for a poison which should be denied them altogether—gathered around it in firm and compact order;—every man stretching his neck between the heads and over the shoulders of others who were nearer the central attraction than himself, while the latter seemed equally anxious even to bend over the barrel, for the purpose of inhaling the favorite perfume of its contents. Happily, the Commissioners gave nothing to the women and children, and to the men only a small quantity, which each one could carry off in a little bowl of birch-bark.

The Commissioners embarked at 8 o'clock, in two large canoes, with the American flag flying, and the musicians playing ‘Yankee Doodle,’ while the broad smooth bosom of the water was in every direction alive with the light barks of the Indians. The latter soon after began to disperse for their various destinations. And so ended the COUNCIL OF FOND DU LAC.

CHAPTER VI.

DISEASES of the Indians—Deformities—Indian DOCTORS—
Care of the sick by their friends—Small-pox among the
Cherokees—Other diseases—System of the Indian doctors—
SURGERY—Sweating—Bleeding—Burning—Other practi-
ses—Anecdote of a Natchez warrior.

The only instance of a *rickety* Indian child which we know of, is mentioned by the traveller Schoolcraft, as observed, a few years ago, in a village near the river Wabash. This was a boy, about ten years of age, who had the misfortune to be born deaf and dumb, and, having been neglected by his parents, had now become so much affected with the rickets as to be nearly unable to move. Mr. Schoolcraft saw the poor little fellow sitting upon the naked earth, within the wigwam, and confined by a cord to some part of it,—no doubt to prevent his doing mischief while the parents were absent. His body was emaciated to a frightful degree, and he continually uttered what seemed to be a low dismal cry of the most wretched distress!

Deformities are sometimes also the unintentional result of an absurd custom which certain tribes have of flattening the head, or otherwise

altering the shape or size of it in infancy, by artificial means. There is a North-Western tribe, called, from the prevalence of such a practice among them, the Flat-Heads. The Indian girls, however, much to the credit of their good sense, are wise enough to be content with their native beauty; they never bring on consumption and deformity by thin dresses, tight lacing or small shoes.

There are many diseases of the whites, which the Indians are never troubled with, such as the gout, the stone, the scrofula, apoplexy, dyspepsy, and other disorders owing, obviously, to the habits of luxury and indolence peculiar for the most part to civilized life.

Some of the most fatal of our diseases have however been introduced, and made frightful ravages among all the tribes. The small-pox is an example of this class. The Cherokees had this horrible disease among them in the year 1758, to such an extent as to reduce the population of that numerous tribe about one half in a year's time. It was brought into Charleston, (South Carolina) by a foreign vessel, and thence conveyed into the Cherokee country in bales of goods purchased at that place by the Indians.

For some time, it made slow advances, and the Cherokee doctors had leisure to try various experiments. The first was, to place the unhappy patient out of doors, where, lying upon the naked ground, *his fever might be cooled by the night-dews!* They soon after adopted the practice of pouring cold water upon the naked breast. All this was attended with religious ceremonies, incantations, doleful songs, and frightful gestures, and the shaking of a calabash full of pebble-stones over the heads of the sick.

As the infection nevertheless gained ground daily, a grand medical consultation was held, and the doctors determined *to sweat their patients, and immediately afterwards to plunge them into a cold running stream.* The Cherokee rivers being remarkably cold, even in summer, (owing to the numberless cold springs of the mountainous country which supplies them) and the pores of the patients more than ordinarily open with fever, they scarcely felt the water, as it rushed through their whole frames, when they expired in agonies upon the spot.

The case now grew desperate. All the wise men broke their consecrated physic-pots; and all their sacred utensils and instruments were

thrown away. A great many of the sick killed themselves,—desperately rushing, in their sullen madness, into the fire, and there slowly burning to death, with as little apparent sensibility to pain as if they had naturally no power of feeling it. Others cut their throats, or stabbed themselves with knives and sharp-pointed canes.

This was the fate of many even of those who recovered from the disease, but found themselves so much disfigured, as to be ashamed to live. Among this number was a celebrated warrior, of a town named Tymáse. His relations perceived his desperate design, and endeavored to prevent its execution by watching him narrowly, and taking every sharp instrument from him. Finding himself thus thwarted, he fretted exceedingly, and said very harsh things of his friends, until he bethought himself of darting against the wall with all his remaining strength. Exhausted, but not otherwise injured much by this violence, he threw himself on his bed, as if to refresh himself, and his friends left him. As soon as he found himself again alone, he arose, and after a tedious search, meeting with nothing but a thick and round *hoe-helve*, he seized it eagerly, fixed one end of it in the ground, and then repeatedly threw him-

self on it till he forced it down his throat, when he immediately expired!

Death by suicide,—whether by shooting, hanging, drowning, poisoning, or other modes,—is not uncommon among the Indians. It is owing to extreme mortification, poverty, and other causes, as among the whites. The band with which Tanner lived, at one time suffered from a formidable disorder, perhaps a species of *Influenza*, which attacked them suddenly at the season of gathering the wild rice of the lakes. Many who recovered, were left disordered in intellect, deaf, or otherwise infirm; and some in their fury dashed themselves against trees and rocks, breaking their arms, or otherwise maiming themselves.

The diseases of the Indians are mostly such as are brought on by long-continued abstinence, by crude and unwholesome food, by immoderate eating, by very violent exercise, extreme fatigue, exposure to the night-air, and lying upon the wet ground. Mr. Heckewelder states, that consumption, pleurisy, the phthisic, (among children) dysentery and rheumatism are common disorders. The last named frequently attacks people of all ages. That gentleman saw individuals, who were fifty or sixty years

old, confined by rheumatism months together; while the same malady, arising from colds, so contracted the limbs of children at the age of ten or twelve, that they never afterwards recovered the use of them. Old age brings on the infirmities common to that stage of life among all nations. Those of the Indians who live remote from the whites, live to be much older than the nearer tribes, who have learned the use of ardent spirits and been otherwise corrupted by 'evil communications.' The women, in general, live longer than the men.

Among all the tribes there is a class of people who act as *doctors*, and who have, or pretend to have an extraordinary degree of skill in the treatment of disorders. Although many of them are great impostors in some respects, they often effect astonishing cures; and some really useful knowledge, and some curious dexterity and ingenuity which supply the place of knowledge, almost all of them undoubtedly possess.

They are well acquainted with the medicinal virtues of roots, herbs, barks and other vegetable productions; such as the barks of the white and black oak, the white walnut in some latitudes, (of which they make pills,) and the

cherry, dogwood, maple, birch, and several other trees. These are prepared in various ways (commonly kept secret) and administered in as many, for almost every description of disease. Sometimes they are mingled with various other ingredients. Mr. Heckewelder once saw an emetic made,—for a Delaware who had poisoned himself with the root of the ‘May Apple,’—*of a piece of racoon-skin burned with the hair on, pounded dry beans, and gunpowder.* The severe vomiting which these singular ingredients—mixed with water, and forced down the patient’s throat,—brought on, rapidly effected the discharge of the poison, and the complete cure of the sufferer.

Mr. Heckewelder had so much faith in the practice of these functionaries, that when he had once suffered, two days and two nights, the most excruciating pain, from a felon or whitlow on one of his fingers, he applied to an old woman for relief; and she, in less than half an hour, cured him entirely by the application of a poultice made of the common blue violet. The chief fault in their mode of doing business, says the same gentleman, was, that they were apt to give too large doses, doubtless on the mistaken principle,—‘the more of a good thing,

the better.' Mr. Adair says,—'I would prefer an old Indian before any Chirurgeon whatsoever, in euring green wounds, bullets, arrows &c., as well for the eertainty and ease, as for the speediness of eure.'

They very rarely cut the flesh, and still more rarely amputate the limb, of a wounded man. Their poultices are made to draw out whatever is necessary from the wound, including even the splinters of broken bones, stones and iron. The same juices are generally the whole food of the patient until the wound is elosed. A drink made of sassafras was used with much suceess by the Canadians. In acùte diseases, like the pleurisy, these Northern doetors worked upon the side opposite the pain, by the application of poultiees.*

In the year 1749, a party of friendly Chiek-asaw Indians visited Charleston (South Carolina) with Mr. Adair. It happened that, on the day of their arrival, a surgeon, belonging to the English troops which were quartered there at the time, cut off the wounded arm of a poor soldier. The Indians were greatly shoeked by the information. 'It was butchery,' they said, 'which would disable and disfigure the man all

* Charlevoix.

the rest of his life; and the surgeon might as well, by the same rule, have cut off the poor fellow's *head*, had he been wounded in that part.'

For the bite of a snake a civilized surgeon would think it necessary, almost always, to mangle the body of the patient in a shocking manner. The Indians, on the contrary, although often bitten by the most dangerous reptiles in the course of their travelling and hunting, are never known either to die by the wound, or to make any considerable incision in the flesh. Where the woods abound with snakes, every man carries in his shot-pouch the wild hore-hound, plantain, or some other well-tried root or herb. When he finds himself struck by his poisonous foe, he immediately chews his root, swallows a quantity of it, and applies a portion of it to the wound. For some time he feels the pains of a severe struggle between the antidote and the venom; but the latter is at length driven from the system the same way it entered, and in a day or two the man feels as well as ever.

Mr. Heckewelder has a story of a famous Shawanese Chieftain, who, about the time when the Revolutionary war broke out, conducted several American traders through the wilderness

of what is now Ohio as far as Pittsburgh, where there was then a fort. The generous warrior, soon after commencing his return, was waylaid and shot by some of his own countrymen who panted to revenge upon the whites the murder of one of their own number by an American, and who hated the Chieftain for befriending them. The wound was a severe one, in the breast; and he travelled on, in this situation, eighty miles, the blood issuing from his body at every breath. Here he met Mr. Heckewelder, whom he assured of the certainty of his being healed if he could only reach a certain village, fifty miles distant, where were several Indian surgeons of eminence. He did so, and was perfectly cured. Ten years afterwards the Missionary saw him at Detroit, in sound health.

The traveller Henry says, that at the Sault de Sainte Marie, on the Lakes, he knew a man who, in the result of a quarrel, received the stroke of an axe in his side. The blow was so violent, and the axe driven so deep, that the wretch who held it could not withdraw it, but left it in the wound, and fled. Shortly after, the man was found, and brought into the fort, where several other Indians came to his assistance. Among these, one, who was a physician,

immediately withdrew, in order to fetch his *penegusan*, or medicine-bag, with which he soon returned. The eyes of the sufferer were fixed, his teeth closed, and his case apparently desperate.

The physician took from his bag a small portion of a very white substance, resembling that of a bone; this he scraped into a little water, and forcing open the jaws of the patient with a stick, he poured the mixture down his throat.

In a short time the patient moved his eyes. Other modes of relief were now adopted, and the man was carried to his lodge. Under his physician's attendance he was able to walk about by the sixth day; and in a month he became quite well, except that he was troubled with a cough. He lived more than twenty years afterwards.

Henry also states that another man, being on his wintering-ground, and from home, hunting beaver, was crossing a lake, covered with smooth ice, with two beavers on his back, when his foot slipped, and he fell. At his side, in his belt, was his axe, the blade of which came upon the joint of his wrist; and, the weight of his body coming upon the blade, his hand was completely separated from his arm, with the

exception of a small piece of the skin. In this condition he had to walk three miles to his lodge. The skin, which alone retained his hand to his arm, he cut through with the same axe which had made the wound; and then, fortunately having on a shirt, he took it off, tore it up, and made a strong ligature above the wrist, so as in some measure to avoid the loss of blood. On reaching his lodge, he cured the wound, himself, by the mere use of simples. Henry was a witness to its perfect healing.

A gentleman residing in a small town, in the State of Maine, not far from 'Old-Town,' the village of the Penobscots, was a few years ago entirely disabled by a severe wound in the leg. After trying in vain the skill of all the civilized doctors of his acquaintance, he accepted the offer of a surgeon of that tribe who undertook to set him on his feet in the course of a week. The Indian immediately commenced his task, and at the end of the appointed time his patient was walking about the streets.

Tanner gives an account of a distinguished hunter, with whom he was well acquainted, named Pa-ke-kun-ne-gah-bo, (meaning, 'he that stands in the smoke') who once accidentally received an entire charge of musket-shot in

his elbow. The joint and the bones of the arm were much shattered. As there seemed to be no probability of its healing, he applied to his friends, to cut it off. When all refused to do so, or to assist him in amputating it himself, he chose a time when he happened to be left alone in his lodge, and taking two knives, the edge of one of which he had hacked into a sort of saw, he with his right hand and arm cut off his left, and threw it from him as far as he could. Soon after, as he related the story himself, he fell asleep, in which situation he was found by his friends, having lost a very great quantity of blood; but he soon afterwards recovered, and notwithstanding the loss of one arm, he became again a great hunter. After this accident, he was commonly called Kosh-kin-ne-kait, ('the cut-off arm.') Thus it is in most cases, when an Indian believes mutilation to be necessary. He hacks his body to pieces with as deliberate composure as if it were a log of wood.

To return to the doctors—their grand specific, after all, and as Charlevoix says, their great preservative *against* all diseases, is *sweating*. So says also Roger Williams, of the New England Indians; Beverley, of the Virginians; Heckewelder, of the Delawares; and many other trav-

ellers, and writers, so that this simple process, —belonging to the people, indeed, rather than to the doctors,—may be considered one of almost universal use.

Charlevoix calls the sweating-place a *stove*. The Canadians were so fond of using it, that whenever a stranger entered one of their cabins, the first thing, after warming him, was to conduct him to the ‘stove’ of the town. These tribes had also a mode of operating on the sick, by laying them on a kind of couch or platform, (at home,) under which they boiled certain kinds of green boughs in a kettle. The vapor caused a plentiful perspiration, and the odour was, as they supposed, ‘very wholesome.’ The steam used in the stove—of which there was always at least one large one in each town—was produced only by water poured upon hot stones.

Heckewelder calls the same contrivance an ‘*oven*.’ The Delawares made one in every town, large enough to accommodate from two to six persons at a time. This was built also, much as Beverley says the Virginians built theirs, on a bank or slope, one half of it within and the other above ground. It was well covered on the top with split plank and earth, and had a door in front, where the ground was

level. The stones, 'of about the size of a large turnip,' were heated outside. While persons were within, sitting over the stones, water was now and then poured on them, to produce fresh steam. This, in rheumatic complaints, was aided by a decoction of roots; and the patient was well wrapped up in blankets, to keep the cold air from him. The women had their own *oven*, which, however, they used less frequently than the men.

Mr. Heckewelder mentions, that in the year 1784, a gentleman whom he had been acquainted with at Detroit, and who had been for a long time in an infirm state of health, came from thence to the village of the Christian Indians on the Huron river, in order to have the benefit of the sweat-oven. It being in the middle of winter, when there was a deep snow on the ground, and the weather very cold, 'I advised him' says Mr. H. 'to postpone his sweating to a warmer season; but he persisting in his resolution, I advised him by no means to remain in the oven longer than fifteen or at most twenty minutes. But when he once was in it, feeling himself comfortable, he remained a full hour, at the end of which he fainted, and was brought by two strong Indians to my house, in very

great pain, and not able to walk. He remained with me until the next day, when we took him down in his sleigh to his family at Detroit. His situation was truly deplorable; his physicians at that place gave up all hopes of his recovery, and he frequently expressed his regret that he had not followed my advice. Suddenly, however, a change took place for the better, and he not only recovered his perfect health, but became a stout corpulent man, so that he would often say, that his going into the sweat-oven was the best thing he had ever done in his life for the benefit of his health. He said so to me fifteen years afterwards, when I saw him in the year 1798. He had not had the least indisposition since that time. He died about the year 1814, at an advanced age.'

Burning and *Bleeding* are other common remedies of the Indians. When a pain is felt in any part of the body, which they do not know how to account for, or how to *get at*, they apply a lighted piece of torch-wood, or a burning pine-knot, directly to the flesh; and this they endure with perfect composure till they feel, or imagine they feel, some relief. Mc'Kenzie saw a sick man, among one of the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, whose sides and bosom

were all covered with scars, caused by the application of fire.*

Among those Northern tribes which Henry visited, but especially among the Chippewas, bleeding is so favorite an operation among the women, as to be rather an amusement. The traveller, of whose skill they had a high notion, sometimes bled a dozen women in a morning, as they sat in a row, along a fallen tree,—beginning with the first—opening the vein—then proceeding to the second—and so on, having three or four of them bleeding at the same moment. This service was invariably required of him in some villages; and no persuasion of his could ever induce a woman to dispense with it.—In Charlevoix's time, bleeding was practised by all the Canadians.

Generally the Indians entertain an extravagant opinion of the medical as well as other science of white men,—especially among the remote tribes. Mr. Adair tells an amusing anecdote of an old warrior of the Natchez tribe (near the Mississippi River,) who, being blind of one eye, and dim-sighted in the other, applied to *him* for a cure. The latter declined operating on so delicate an organ as the eye; but

* Voyages, p. 318.

the Indian, conceiving that this was only the effect of excessive modesty, became very importunate. Finally, as he would take no denial, the white man undertook to commence the business of an oculist. A time and place were appointed for performing the operation.

When the patient came, according to this appointment, Mr. Adair happened to be in the act of drinking a glass of some sort of ardent spirit. The Indian observed this, and with some sagacity remarked, that perhaps he had better defer that refreshment till after the eye was fixed. ‘No,’ said Adair, jokingly, ‘I drank so on purpose to raise my spirits, and enable me to *sing strong*, [alluding to the Indian doctors’ custom of singing.] And I think,’ added he, ‘that you will be the better for taking a little, yourself.’

This argument was irresistible; and the Indian, altering his opinion very suddenly, took a good draught of the beverage before him, and lay down on the floor, as flat and still as if drunkenness had already overpowered him. After a variety of wild capers and ceremonies, performed with a view of humoring the prejudices of his patient, Mr. Adair began to howl, ‘*Sheela na guira*,’—‘Will you drink wine?’—

and then drank to the Indian's health, and induced him also to return the compliment with rather liberal measure,—perhaps expecting to benefit him by the efficacy of some herb mingled with the drink.

All this suited him well; it was the most agreeable medicine in the world; and Mr. Adair was of course thus far, a very clever fellow, and a first rate doctor. But at length the latter came to apply a quill-full of *fine burnt alum and roman vitriol*, which he blowed lustily into the eye of the Indian. He bore it once, with the composure of a statue, still lying flat on his back, and without winking. But when his doctor undertook to blow it into him a second time, he suddenly gave a violent spring, leaped up, and hopped about the room like a madman. 'Bad physic! Bad song!' cried he, with a voice of thunder. When he had ceased yelling so that another voice might be heard,—'The English physic, truly, is a little stronger than yours,' says Mr. Adair; 'and when they fail to make a man jump and howl, it's a sure sign they are good for nothing. I think *you* are doing very well.' The Indian acquiesced, owing to the soporific effect of what he had drunk; but he ever afterwards used to say that

he had a remarkably narrow chance of having his only eye burnt out of his head. It was his own fault, he added. It was for drinking *Joka Hoome*, ('the bitter water,') and for presuming to prefer to the religious doctors of the Natchez, a profane miserable '*Nothing*,' (Mr. Adair) who lied, drank, ate hog's flesh and sung *Ta-rooa Ookproo'sto* or 'the Devil's own tune.'

It is melancholy to observe the extent to which the ignorance and superstition of the Indians lead them thus to place implicit confidence in a class of men so crafty, and yet so useless, as these 'religious doctors.' The influence of Christianity, alone, could be relied upon as an effectual cure of the evil.

CHAPTER VII.

Anecdotes of the Indian JUGGLERS—Practises of those who act as doctors—The Jugglers of the Virginian tribes—Of the New England, Canadian, and Delaware Jugglers—Jugglers who do not act as doctors—Weather-wise Jugglers—Consultation of the GREAT TURTLE—Story of CHENOS—Of MUKWAH—Of the ‘honest Quaker.’

There are two classes of Indian jugglers; first, those who confine themselves to the practice of medicine; and secondly, those who undertake the exercise of similar imposition for the pretended accomplishment of some other object.



An essential part of the Indian Medical ‘Art,’ not yet noticed, will be found to consist in a variety of fantastic ceremonies and stratagems; intended generally as an ingenious mode of cheating the unlucky patient out of his property

in the way of *fees*, though no doubt sometimes meant, and even well adapted, to benefit his health by favorably affecting his imagination. The Indians universally believing in witchcraft and other evil influence, the jugglers have only to pretend that the disorder on account of which application is made to them, is one that no *common* medicine will heal, and to the treatment of which the talents of *common* physicians are not competent. Supernatural remedies, say they, must be applied, to defeat the designs of the malicious enemy who has taken possession of the body of the sick man.

Having persuaded his feeble patient of the truth of these preposterous statements, the juggler next convinces him of the necessity of making *him* 'very strong,'—that is, giving him a large fee in advance for his great trouble and immense skill. Of course, the juggler very rarely fails, when applied to, in the first instance, to represent the disorder as *one of the witchcraft kind*. He receives his fee—a rifle, perhaps, or a good horse—and is then ready to commence operations.

Attired in a frightful dress, he approaches his patient, with a variety of contortions and gestures, and performs by his side and over him

all the antic tricks that his imagination can suggest. He breathes on him, blows in his mouth, and squirts some medicines which he has prepared, in his face, mouth and nose; he rattles his gourd filled with dry beans or pebbles, and pulls out and handles about a variety of sticks and bundles, in which he appears to be seeking for the proper remedy. All this is accompanied with the most horrid gesticulations, by which he endeavors, as he says, to frighten the spirit or the disorder away; and he continues in this manner until he is quite exhausted and out of breath, when he retires to await the issue.

This description, applied by Heckewelder to the Delaware jugglers, holds true of the same class, under various names, throughout the continent. Henry gives a description of a singular scene witnessed by him among one of the remote Lake tribes. The patient in this case, was a female child of about twelve years of age.

The juggler seated himself on the ground; and before him, on a new blanket, was placed a basin of water, in which were three bones. In his hand, he had his rattle, with which he beat time to his *medicine-song*. The sick child lay on a blanket, near the physician. She ap-

peared to have much fever, and a severe oppression of the lungs, breathing with difficulty, and betraying symptoms of the last stage of consumption.

After singing for some time, the physician took one of the bones out of the basin: the bone was hollow; and one end being applied to the breast of the patient, he put the other into his mouth, in order to remove the disorder by suction. Having persevered in this as long as he thought proper, he suddenly seemed to force the bone into his mouth, and swallow it. He now acted the part of one suffering severe pain; but, presently finding relief, he made a long speech, and after this, returned to singing, and to the accompaniment of his rattle. With the latter, during his song, he struck his head, breast, sides and back; at the same time straining, as if to vomit forth the bone.

Relinquishing this attempt, he applied himself to suction a second time, and with the second of the three bones; and this also he soon seemed to swallow.

Upon its disappearance, he began to distort himself in the most frightful manner, using every gesture which could convey the idea of pain: at length, he succeeded, or pretended to

succeed, in throwing up one of the bones. This was handed about to the spectators, and strictly examined; but nothing remarkable could be discovered. Upon this, he went back to his song and rattle; and after some time threw up the second of the two bones. In the groove of this, the physician, upon examination, found, and displayed to all present, a small white substance, resembling a piece of the quill of a feather. It was passed round the company, from one to the other; and declared, by the physician, to be the thing causing the disorder of his patient.*

Unluckily for this poor girl, all the juggler's distortions and declarations proved alike vain and false; for she died on the day succeeding this performance. The juggler *then* asserted, no doubt, that he was called upon too late, or that he was not made *strong enough* (with fees) to master the evil spirit. The Indians are commonly simple enough to be satisfied with such explanations, while, on the other hand, every accidental recovery is remembered as a prodigious triumph of the juggler's art.

Charlevoix states that when the Canadian jugglers entered a patient's cabin, one of their

* Henry's Travels and Adventures.

tricks was to thrust into the earth a piece of wood fastened to a string. Afterwards they offered the end of the string to all the company present, requesting them to pull up the wood. As this was found difficult to do, they affirmed that the 'Devil' was at the bottom of it. Then feigning, with all sorts of strange gestures and grimaces, to stab this evil spirit, they gradually loosened the wood, by raking away the earth from around it, and finally drew it forth, when to the bottom of it appears fastened a little bone or stone. This they hold up as the '*cause of the Distemper.*' 'It was necessary to kill the Devil in order to get at it.' He then predicted the recovery of his patient,—having taken good care beforehand to observe the favorable symptoms of his case; but if after this it should turn out differently, nothing was easier than to observe that 'although the Devil was killed, indeed, yet, unluckily, he had given the patient a mortal stab or gripe in the course of the combat, before he was himself disabled by the juggler.'

The juggler's dress is not always so unassuming as that of the Virginian is represented by Beverly.* They frequently make themselves

* See cut at the head of the chapter.

as hideous as possible. Mr. Heckewelder was once walking in the streets of a large Indian village on the river Muskingum (Ohio,) in company with the old Delaware Chieftain, KILL-BUCK, when he was very suddenly startled by the sight, as he supposed, of a monstrous bear. The *animal*, walking upright on his hind legs, as the bear is known to do, rushed out from a house near by, and flew about in a manner which frightened the good missionary exceedingly, so that he speedily took refuge behind Kill-Buck, to make his escape from the wild beast.

‘What’s the matter, my friend?’ inquired the chief, smiling, ‘It is only our *Doctor* which you see.’ A Doctor!’ replied Heckewelder, ‘a Doctor, walking on his hind legs, and with horns on his head?’ Such indeed, proved to be the fact; the man had undertaken to amuse himself by playing this trick in the street, which he more commonly performed only for the benefit of his patient. His outside dress was an entire garment made of one or more bear-skins, as black as jet, so well fitted and sewed together that the wearer himself was in no place to be perceived. The whole head of the animal, including mouth, nose, teeth and ears, appear-

ed the same as when he was living; and so did the legs, and the feet, with their long claws. The bushy tail behind, moving to and fro, as he sprang along upon the ground, and the horns on his head were not so much in character. The Juggler saw through two holes set with glass; and holes had been cut underneath, for his hands, through which he held and managed all his doctor's implements, while they, being covered with long shaggy fur, remained themselves invisible.

But, easily as the Indians are deceived where an appeal is addressed to their superstition, a man must have some ingenuity to carry on a system of imposition for a long time together; and they treat people whom they consider mere pretenders, and not real sorcerers, with very little respect.

When Tanner was among the Knistenaux, one of his comrades fell sick, and application for relief was made by the patient's friends to an old 'medicine-man' named *Mukwah* (The Bear.) 'Give me,' said he, 'ten beaver-skins, and I will begin.' They exerted themselves to raise nine, and to these added a considerable piece of cloth, which was received as an equivalent for the tenth. He prepared his lodge for

the first days' practice before the patient was admitted, who, being then brought in, was seated on a mat near the fire. Old Mukwah, who was a ventriloquist of but indiffèrent powers, and a medicine-man of no great fame, imitated, as well as he could, various sounds, and endeavored to make those standing by believe they proceeded from the breast of the sick man. At length he said, he heard the sound of bad fire in the breast of the Naudoway, and putting one hand to his breast, the other and his mouth to the back, he continued for some time blowing and rubbing, when, as if by accident, he dropped a little ball upon the ground. After again blowing and rubbing, alternately dropping the little ball, and rubbing it between his hands, he at length threw it into the fire, where it burned, with a little whizzing noise, like damp powder.

This did not surprise Tanner at all, for he observed that the old fellow had sliely scattered some powder about the floor. Neither did the spectators generally seem to be satisfied. Perceiving this, the Doctor now asserted that the sick man had a snake in his breast, which could not be removed till the following day. The process was *then* renewed, and after various

mummeries and grimaces, he pretended to draw from his patient's body a small snake. The deception was, however, so awkwardly managed, that the Indians, instead of valuing his services at all, pestered the old fellow exceedingly, for a long time afterwards, by laughing at him, imitating his noises, and calling him the 'great doctor.'

The *second* class of jugglers are those who get their living by pretensions to supernatural knowledge of some kind other than medical. Some undertake to bring down rain in dry weather. Some prepare doses for bad hunters, that they may have good luck. Others make 'philters,' or love-potions, for married people who disagree, or to bring an attachment between the applicant for the nostrum and some other person whom he or she *wishes* to marry.

When, says Mr. Heekewelder, one of these jugglers is called upon to bring down rain during a drought, he must in the first instance receive a fee. This fee is made up by the women, who, as cultivators of the land are supposed to be most interested, but the men will slyly slip something into their hands in aid of their collection. This consists of wampum-beads, tobacco, silver broaches, and a dressed

deer-skin to make shoes of. If the juggler does not succeed in his experiment, he never is in want of an excuse: either the winds are in opposition to one another; the dry wind or air is too powerful for the moist or south wind; or he has not been made *strong enough*, (that is sufficiently paid) to compel the north to give way to the south from whence the rain is to come; or lastly, he wants time to invoke the Great Spirit to aid him on the important occasion.

In the summer of 1799, an uncommon drought prevailed in the Muskinghum country, so that every green thing, even to the grass and the leaves of the trees, appeared to be perishing. In this emergency, the women applied to an old Delaware whose name was Chenos, to supply them with the weather they wanted. They gave him a good fee, and he made an attempt, which failed. He was paid again, and made a second trial, in the course of which Mr. Heckewelder, happening to pass by the place where he was at work, and knowing him very well, asked him what he was doing.

‘I am hired,’ said he, ‘to do a very hard day’s work.’

Q. ‘And, pray, what work?’

A. ‘Why, to bring down rain from the sky.’

Q. 'Who hired you to do that?'

A. 'The women of the village; don't you see how much rain is wanted, and that the corn and every thing else is perishing?'

Q. 'But can you make it rain?'

A. 'I can, and you shall be convinced of it this very day.'

He had, by this time, encompassed a square of about five feet each way, with stakes and bark so that it might resemble a pig-pen of about three feet in height; and now, with his face uplifted and turned towards the north, he was muttering something. Then closely shutting up with bark the opening which had been left on the north side, he turned in the same manner, still muttering towards the south, as if invoking some superior being: and having cut through the bark on the south-west corner, so as to make an opening of two feet, he said; 'Now we shall have rain enough!'

Hearing, down the river (Muskingum,) on the banks of which he was at work, the sound of setting-poles striking against a canoe, he inquired of Mr. Heckewelder what it was. The latter replied, it was the Indians coming up a-stream, to make a bush-net for fishing. 'Send them home again,' said the Juggler; 'tell them

this will be a poor day for fishing.' When they came up within hearing, he cried out to them, himself, to go home, 'for the rain would wet them all through.' 'No matter, Father!' one of them shouted, 'no matter: give us only rain, and we 'll never mind the soaking.'

Mr. Heckewelder now pursued his journey to the next Indian village, leaving the Juggler still at his business. On his arrival, he mentioned what he had seen and heard to the Chief of the place, whom he knew; and told him that he thought it impossible they should have rain, while the sky was so clear as it then was and had been for five weeks, without its being previously announced by some signs of change in the atmosphere. 'Oh no!' answered the Chief; 'Chenos knows perfectly well what he 's about. He can always predict what the weather will be. There is no fear for him.' And, accordingly the result was, that although the sky continued the same as in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon, at that time the horizon suddenly became overcast. Soon after, without either thunder or wind, it began to rain, and continued raining for several hours, until the ground was thoroughly soaked.

Doubtless this juggler was a very strict and

constant observer of the weather, and of all the signs and indications of its various changes which are to be seen in the woods, winds, and streams. These he had studied carefully on the present occasion, while the Indians, wholly neglecting them, attributed the rain altogether to the efficacy of his capers and howling.

While the Chippewas who attended the Council of Fond du Lac, as already related, were at that place, Colonel Mc'Kenney was witness to an amusing exhibition by one of their jugglers, which he was invited by the Indians to attend one evening, about nine o'clock. On reaching the appointed spot he found that a kind of tent had been erected, consisting of an oval pole-frame, covered with the sails belonging to two boats, fastened to the poles with ropes. The Juggler, with some twenty other Indians, was sitting at a short distance from the tent,—all silent and motionless as statues.

Presently he rose from his seat on the ground, climbed to the top of the enclosures, and there placing himself very composedly a little while, began in a low tone to mutter unintelligible sounds. These grew louder and louder, till he reached the utmost pitch of his voice. Then they lowered again to sounds scarcely audible, and at length wholly ceased.

All this was supposed to be an address to the 'Great Spirit,' beseeching him to send 'devils' to the Juggler, and to give him the command over them. He now sang an Indian air without words, and descended to the bottom of the enclosure, within. Having been there a few minutes, he spoke, and three Indians, upon this, followed each other round the enclosure several times, with their hands upon it. Two of them then sat down, while the third continued standing, to attend to the expected asking and answering of questions, which was in this case the chief object of the performance. But before either of them spoke, the poles of the tent were perceived to be violently shaken; and presently after something was heard to fall upon the ground within, with great weight. The same thing happened repeatedly, the sound of the falling weight being each time heard immediately after the shaking, and while the Juggler was uttering a tremulous crying kind of noise. Fifteen times the process was repeated; and this being understood by the Indians to indicate the lighting down of as many 'devils' within, it was now solemnly announced that the Juggler was ready to answer any questions which might be proposed.

‘What is our Great Father at Washington [meaning President Adams] doing at this time?’ shouted one of the three attendants without. The tent was instantly and violently shaken, and the Indians who sat about Mr. Mc’Kenney very gravely hinted to him that ‘a devil had been let loose to get information.’ The answer was soon announced, preceded by another shake,—‘He is doing nothing, but sitting quietly thinking about this treaty; his people are all around him, with white papers before them.’ Mr. Mc’Kenney did not stay to hear much more of this nonsense; but before he went away, he heard it announced that ‘*the devils were thirsty, and wanted something to drink,*’—a hint no doubt on the part of the Juggler, to which, however, the Colonel politely responded by ordering the distribution of a quantity of tobacco, and a small ration of well-diluted whiskey.

The shaking of the poles, which the Indians considered supernatural, was no doubt easily effected by the labor of the Juggler himself; and the falling from his own hands of a stone, which he had within, must have produced the sound mistaken by them for the lighting of the ‘devils.’ Such an impression had been made

upon their superstitious credulity of these 'heathen, in their blindness,' on some former occasions, by the fact that now and then a shrewd answer to some of their numerous questions had happened to prove true! This was remembered, like the prize drawn in a lottery. The failures, like the blanks, were forgotten.

The ceremony here described took place in 1826. We now turn to Mr. Henry's account of a similar performance of some of the Lake savages at the Sault de Sainte Marie, in the year 1764. This also was an invocation to the 'Great Spirit,'—or as these people called him, the 'GREAT TURTLE,'—the particular and pressing occasion of which was a message sent to the Indians by the English General, Sir William Johnson, inviting and advising them to make peace.

The tent, for the juggler, or priest, which in this case was constructed with great care, was placed in the centre of a large lodge or wigwam, built all around it expressly for the occasion, and lighted partially—the ceremony taking place in the night-time—by several fires. Nearly the whole village having assembled within the house, and around the tent, it was not long before the priest appeared, almost in a state of

nakedness. As he approached the tent the skins were lifted up, as much as was necessary to allow of his creeping under them, on his hands and knees. His head was scarcely within side, when the edifice, massy as it has been described, began to shake; and the skins were no sooner let fall, than the sounds of numerous voices were heard beneath them; some yelling; some barking as dogs; some howling like wolves: and in this horrible concert were mingled screams and sobs, as of despair, anguish and the sharpest pain. Articulate speech was also uttered, as if from human lips; but in a tongue unknown to any of the audience.

After some time, these confused and frightful noises were succeeded by a perfect silence; and now a voice, not heard before, seemed to manifest the arrival of a new character in the tent. This was a low and feeble voice, resembling the cry of a young puppy. The sound was no sooner distinguished, than all the Indians clapped their hands for joy, exclaiming, that this was the Chief Spirit, the **TURTLE**, the spirit that never lied! Other voices, which they had discriminated from time to time, they had previously hissed, as recognising them to belong to evil and lying spirits, which deceive mankind.

New sounds came from the tent. During the space of half an hour, a succession of songs were heard, in which a diversity of voices met the ear. From his first entrance, till these songs were finished, nothing was heard in the proper voice of the priest; but, now, he addressed the multitude, declaring the presence of the GREAT TURTLE, and the Spirit's readiness to answer such questions as should be proposed.

The questions were to come from the Chief of the village, who was silent, however, till after he had put a large quantity of tobacco into the tent, introducing it at the aperture. This was a sacrifice, offered to the Spirit; for spirits are supposed by the Indians to be as fond of tobacco as themselves. The tobacco accepted, he desired the priest to inquire, Whether or not the English were preparing to make war upon the Indians? and, Whether or not there were at Fort Niagara a large number of English troops?

These questions having been put, the tent instantly shook; and for some seconds after, it continued to rock so violently that Henry expected to see it levelled to the ground. Presently a terrific cry announced the departure of

the **TURTLE**. Then a quarter of an hour elapsed in silence, at the end of which time something was heard which was said to be the voice of the Spirit returned. It was wholly unintelligible, and the priest, therefore, when it ceased speaking, undertook to explain what it meant.

He said that the **Turtle** had, during his short absence, crossed **Lake Huron**, and even proceeded as far as **Fort Niagara**, which is at the head of **Lake Ontario**, and thence to **Montreal**. At **Fort Niagara** he had seen no great number of soldiers; but, on descending the **Saint Lawrence**, as low as **Montreal**, he had found the river covered with boats, and the boats filled with soldiers, in number like the leaves of the trees. He had met them on their way up the river, coming to make war upon the Indians.

The Chief had a third question to propose, and the Spirit, without a fresh journey to **Fort Niagara**, was able to give it an instant and most favorable answer: 'If,' said the Chief, 'the Indians visit **Sir William Johnson**, will they be received as friends?'

'**Sir William Johnson**,' said the Spirit, (and after the Spirit, the priest,) '**Sir William Johnson** will fill their canoes with presents; with

blankets, kettles, guns, gunpowder and shot, and large barrels of rum, such as the stoutest of the Indians will not be able to lift; and every man will return in safety to his family.'

At this, the transport was universal; and, amid the clapping of hands, a hundred voices exclaimed, 'I will go, too! I will go, too!'

The question of public interest being thus settled, individuals were now permitted to make inquiries relating to their sick and absent friends; and a consultation of this kind continued until near midnight, when the crowd dispersed and went home.

Such was the skill with which this performance was carried on, that Henry, although he was present during the whole time, and narrowly watched every movement, could make no discoveries of the mode of operation within.

The jugglers have it in their power to do much mischief, and they sometimes avail themselves, with the most malicious cunning, of the awe with which their exercises are regarded. Hence the origin of witchcraft. If they have an enemy, for example, in the person of some individual of their tribe, who perhaps discredits and ridicules them,—or any principal man in the tribe has such an enemy, whom he wishes

to be rid of, by bribing the services of the juggler,—there is almost always an opportunity of effecting the object by representing the person as a *wizzard*, than which no character is more hateful to the Indians. In many instances the unfortunate victim, himself, thus pointed out to the gaze and dread of his countrymen, has felt so much of their own superstitious terror, and at the same time taken his disgrace so much to heart, as to pine away and at length perish under the influence of his imaginary disorder. In numerous other cases, he has fallen a prey to the furious zeal of his tribe, who,—no more barbarous in this respect, indeed, than their civilized English neighbors of the seventeenth century,—have sacrificed the unhappy man at the fagot.

A well-attested anecdote, with which we shall close this chapter, will sufficiently show how vain it is to attempt convincing the Indians of the delusion practised upon them by the impostors in whose supernatural power they place such implicit confidence.

About the time when the Revolutionary war broke out, there was a Quaker trader residing among one of the Western tribes. His name was John Anderson, but the Indians commonly

called him '*the honest Quaker trader.*' After having many times argued with them against the existence of witchcraft, and the craft of their sorcerers, in vain, he took the courageous resolution of publicly putting the power of some of these people to the test. He therefore desired that two of them should be brought before him, on different days, who should have perfect liberty to do him all the harm they could by their magic,—and that in presence of the chiefs and principal men of the village.

The Indians, who were much attached to Anderson, endeavored to dissuade him from trying so *dangerous* an experiment; but he insisted on having his own way. Upon this a conjurer was brought to him, who professed himself fully competent to the task for which he was called, but he could not be persuaded to make the attempt. He declared that Anderson was so good and so honest a man, so much his friend and the friend of all the Indians, that he could not think of doing him an injury. He never practised his art but on bad men and on those who had injured him; the great '*Mannitto*' forbid that he should use it for such a wicked purpose as that for which he was now called upon!

The Indians thought this excuse perfectly good, and retired more convinced than ever of the abilities of their conjurer, whom they now revered for his conscientious scruples.

The one who was brought on the next day was of a different stamp. He was an arch sorcerer, whose fame was extended far and wide, and was much dreaded by the Indians, not only on account of his great powers, but of the wicked disposition of his mind. Every effort was made to dissuade Mr. Anderson from exposing himself to what was considered as certain destruction; but he stood firm to his purpose, and only stipulated that the magician should sit at the distance of about twelve feet from him, that he should not be armed with any weapon, nor carry any poison or any thing else of a known destructive nature, and that he should not even rise from his seat, nor advance towards him during the operation. All this was agreed to, the conjurer boasting that he could effect his purpose even at the distance of one hundred miles. The promised reward was brought and placed in full view, and both parties now prepared for the experiment.

The spectators being all assembled, the sorcerer took his seat, arrayed in the most fright-

ful manner that he could devise. Anderson stood firm and composed before him at the stipulated distance. All were silent and attentive while the wizzard began his terrible operation. He commenced working with his fingers on his blanket, plucking now and then a little wool and breathing on it, then rolling it together in small rolls of the size of a bean; and so went through all the antic tricks to which the power of bewitching is generally ascribed. But all this had no effect. Anderson remained cool and composed, occasionally calling to his antagonist not to be sparing of his exertions. The conjurer now began to make the most horrid gesticulations, and used every means in his power to frighten the honest quaker, who, aware of his purpose, still remained unmoved. At last, while the eyes of all the spectators were fixed on this brave man, to observe the effects of the sorcerer's craft upon him, this terrible conjurer, finding that all his efforts were vain, found himself obliged to give up the point, and to allege for his excuse 'that the white men eat too much salt provisions; that salt had a repulsive effect, which made the powerful invisible substance he employed recoil upon him; and that the Indians, who eat but little salt,

had often felt the effects of this substance, but that the great quantity of it which the white men used effectually protected them against it.'

Mr. Heckewelder, who relates this anecdote, was informed of the particulars by Anderson himself, who observed that the imposition was perfectly plain to him, as it must have been to any tolerably sensible white man; but that the Indians, notwithstanding the failure, believed as firmly afterwards as before, both in the power of the conjurer, and in the truth of his excuses. 'Ah! it was very clear,' said they; 'it was the *salt* that saved the Quaker, and a lucky fellow was he, to have lived upon salt meat!'

* Historical Account.

CHAPTER VIII.

Religion of the Indians—Traditions of the Creation, Deluge &c.—Ideas of the soul, of a future state,—of virtue and vice,—and of spirits—Sacrifices—Annual sacrifice of the Mandans—Initiation of boys—‘Huskanaw’ing—Dreams—Idols and images—Anecdotes of Indian religion and superstition—Story related by Beverly.

All the tribes, we suppose, believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of the world, to whom different names are given, as the ‘Great Spirit,’ or the ‘Master of Life.’ The traditions respecting the mode and time of the work of creation are as various as the imagination of man could devise. Some of them are very singular.

Quite generally there is a tradition of *the deluge*, dimly discoverable under some form, though curiously connected with ideas which have no relation to the truth. The ancient Five Nations supposed (according to Charlevoix,) that there were three generations of a certain family on the earth before the flood; that when this came, they were all destroyed; and that *to repeople the earth afterwards, beasts were changed into men.*

The traveller Henry gathered a different ac-

count among some of the Lake tribes. A person of great character, say they—the Father of all the Indian nations—lived, originally towards the ‘setting sun,’ where, being warned in a dream that a flood was coming, he built a raft, on which he afterwards preserved his own family and the whole of the animal world. His raft drifted about many months during the deluge, till he began at length to despair; and even the animals he had saved, having the gift of speech, murmured loudly against him. Finally, a new earth was made, and man and the animals placed upon it. The use of speech was afterwards taken from the latter on account of a conspiracy which they entered into against man, the bear being the ringleader of the plot.

Many tribes have a tradition that they existed originally somewhere within the bosom of the earth, which they call their common ‘*mother*,’ either in human shape, or in the form of the rabbit, the tortoise, or the ground-hog. Hence the reverence paid to those animals in hunting, so long as the tradition was preserved.*

The *Minsi* tribe of the Delawares supposed that *they* in the first instance lived under a lake, but that luckily, one of their number one day

* Heckewelder. And see chapter on Hunting, Vol. I.

found a hole in the surface of the earth. He crawled out, and wandered around, till he killed a deer. He carried the animal back into the earth with him; and the meat being there roasted and eaten, his companions thought it so good that they resolved to leave their dismal abode, and come forth to hunt and to enjoy the pleasant glow of the sunshine. The deer was supposed to have been killed by a *wolf*; and hence the Minsi had a particular regard for that animal, and even sometimes called themselves the Wolf Tribe.—The Indians very generally ascribe to all the animals more or less of a rational soul, and of an intimate relationship to man.

The Mandans of the Upper Missouri believe that they originally lived inside of the earth. Here it happened that a very luxurious vine grew up from one of their corn-fields to a great height through a hole in the earth; and that one of their young men climbed up this vine until he came out on the surface of the earth where the Mandan village now stands. He looked eagerly around, admired the verdure and beauty of the woods and prairies, saw many large herds of buffaloes, and finally killed one of those animals, took a part of the meat on his shoulder, and returned with it down the vine to

his old residence within the earth. His countrymen, exceedingly pleased with the account he gave of his adventures, pressed forward to climb the vine. Several succeeded in reaching the surface, but unfortunately one very large fat woman took hold with such violence, in her great anxiety to ascend, that she broke down the vine, and so put an end at once to all further intercourse between those who had gained the surface and those who remained below. The former, (add the Mandans,) forthwith commenced building the village which still stands; the latter are supposed to be living under ground to this day.*

A belief in the immortality of the soul is common to all the tribes, while they differ much in their opinions as to its situation after death. Some suppose it to remain for a time in this world, invisible, but capable of seeing and hearing its old acquaintances, and even of assisting them in moments of distress. But sooner or later it must travel a long journey to the far-off *land of spirits*—in the South-west. This requires several months to perform, and is attended with numerous difficulties, such as crossing rapid streams upon a single log, and meeting

* Catlin's Letters to the N. Y. Com. Advertiser : 1833.

with ferocious dogs or wild beasts. Meanwhile, the spirit, being supposed still to feel the appetites belonging to it during life, must be supplied with proper conveniences for travelling and subsistence, at least until it has had time to acquire different habits. Hence, food, weapons for hunting, a pipe, a tinder-box and flint, and other similar articles, are placed in the grave alongside of the corpse. In modern times a bottle of whiskey is commonly found among these offerings, especially if the deceased happens to have been more than usually fond of that favorite though fatal beverage.

The Indians all believe, also, in a future state of rewards and punishments, although they differ respecting the mode, and also in regard to what general character and course of conduct will either condemn a man on the one hand, or entitle him to the favor of the Great Spirit on the other.

To be a good hunter and a great warrior, and especially to have killed a great number of the enemy in war, are esteemed strong recommendations to future happiness. The virtues of hospitality, of charity, of fortitude, are also considered; and in fine, whatever, according to their notions, goes to make up a meritorious

character. Even the beasts have their part of paradise, for the Indian

—‘Thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company:’

And not his dog only, but the whole race of animals, including an abundance of excellent *game*, of every description, — with hunting-grounds and fishing-privileges in proportion. Thus the hunter will be able to enjoy himself constantly in his favorite amusement, while an eternal spring will freshen the pathway under his feet with flowers, and fill the woods around him with melody and verdure.

Those who are punished, it is believed, are only punished for a time, and then admitted into the company of the good. Some tribes suppose the punishment to consist in one thing, and some in another. Perhaps, for example, in crossing a stream upon a log, the bad spirit will slip off, and be condemned to remain in the water up to his chin, within sight of the happiness of the good, but without the power of partaking of it.

Some of those tribes living farthest North, imagine this place of punishment to be a cold and desolate country, without game, where there is but a bare possibility of sustaining life

in the midst of perpetual snows. Such is the belief of the Mandans, as represented by an accurate observer who has spent considerable time among them during the last season.*

But the Great Spirit is by no means the only one superior to man in whose existence the Indians believe. Most of them hold that there is an evil Spirit, also, of great power. They believe, too, universally, in the existence of minor spirits, having guardianship over particular things, persons, or places. Their mythology in this respect resembles that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. There are however too many varieties in it, throughout the continent, to admit of any better description than such as will be furnished in the anecdotes with which this account of the Indian religion will be closed.

Sacrifices to all the Spirits we have named are every where practised. Frequently, when the Northern Indian, in navigating the lakes, comes to a particular island or point well-known, he stops to leave an offering of tobacco, or to throw a dog into the water; and there are some places where observances of this kind have

Mr. Catlin, the artist, whose highly interesting letters respecting the Indians beyond the Mississippi, have just been referred to.

regularly taken place for centuries. So it is in the case of storms, and in other dangers.

In some parts of the continent, beside the various feasts and ceremonies heretofore mentioned, there is a regular religious observance, once a year or oftener, the object of which is to propitiate the favor of the Great Spirit, especially in hunting, by doing penance for the sins of the preceding season. Mr. Catlin gives a minute description of a performance of this kind, which he witnessed last summer at one of the Mandan villages, and which was connected with what appears to have been a commemoration of the *subsiding of the deluge*. It is difficult to conjecture whether their ideas on this latter subject have been handed down to them from time immemorial by their ancestors, or, on the other hand, have been derived from French or other missionaries or travellers.

In the centre of this village, (says our traveller,) is a circular area of one hundred and fifty feet in diameter, which is kept vacant for all public ceremonies. One of the lodges fronting this circle is called the *Medicine-Lodge*, being seventy-five feet in diameter, and never opened except for the performance of some of their mysteries or *medicine*.

On the morning of the day previous to the commencement of these ceremonies, there appears on the prairies, at a distance, a man whom they all recognise as (Nu-mohk-muck-annah) *the first or only man*, who by slow degrees approaches and enters the village with a great deal of form and parade, as if he had just arrived from the West. His body is painted red, his robe is of four white wolf-skins, his head-dress of two raven-skins, and in his hand he holds a pipe of huge dimensions. At his approach the medicine-lodge is thrown open, and prepared by covering the floor of it with the branches of green willow, perfuming it with the most fragrant herbs which can be collected, and placing in several parts of it a curious display of buffalo and human skulls. During this preparation he visits every lodge in the village, and demands from every one a knife or other edged tool, which is readily given to be sacrificed, for he says, ‘with these things the *great canoe* [the ‘Ark’] was built.’ These articles are kept in the medicine-lodge until the ceremonies are over, and they are then sacrificed by throwing them into the water.

At sun-rise on the following morning, the *First Man*, opens and enters the medicine-

lodge. After him follow a number of young men, who are to do penance by inflicting tortures upon their own persons. They are almost entirely naked, and their bodies painted with clay—some yellow, some white, and some red. Each one brings with him his arms and *medicine* or *charm*—the first consisting of his bow and quiver, shield, or arrow-fender, lance, &c. and the latter, of the skins of animals or birds, dried, stuffed, and ornamented in a variety of ways. These are suspended over the heads of their appropriate owners, who lie at equal distances around the sides of the lodge. Soon after enters the *conductor of the ceremonies*, his body painted yellow, a leather apron or girdle about his loins, and his cap of white buffalo-skin. He receives the large pipe from the other, who leaves the lodge and immediately returns again to the West, and does not again make his approach until the next annual celebration.—This man, after receiving the pipe, is considered the greatest medicine-man in the village, and is master of ceremonies during the occasion. He takes charge of the lodge, remaining in it four days and nights without eating or drinking, (during the whole of which time he is crying and wailing at a most hideous

rate) and strictly guarding the penitents, who are under his care, and not allowed to leave the lodge, or to partake of food or drink.

During the three first days there are a great variety of dances, and curious songs, performed in front of the medicine-lodge, by persons fantastically dressed and painted for the purpose, around a curb of six feet in diameter, and ten feet in height, which stands in front of the medicine-lodge, containing some of their most sacred medicines, and preserved as the symbol of the Ark, or 'great canoe.' On the first day they dance four times; on the second, eight; on the third, twelve; and on the fourth day, sixteen times.

The principal actors in these scenes are eight men, naked—their bodies painted black—with a buffalo-skin, with horns on, thrown over them; their bodies in a horizontal position, and a wreath of willows in each hand as they perform the 'buffalo-dance:' next, two men, naked—their bodies painted black—with the skin of a grisly bear thrown over them, intended to represent that animal: two boys, naked—their bodies and faces black, and spotted with white, representing the sky or firmament: two boys,—naked bodies, and faces red, with stripes of

white, up and down, representing ghosts: two men, naked—bodies black, and heads white, representing bald eagles: a great number of boys—bodies yellow, head and feet white, called *cabri* or antelope: and finally, four very aged men with saeks of water on which they beat with a stick, in time with the other music. These saeks are made of the skin of the buffalo's neck, in the form of a large tortoise, which they admirably represent; each containing several gallons of water, which has been kept tightly enclosed in them from time immemorial, and which, from their veneration, they cannot venture to change. Two men, with a rattle in each hand, violently shaken as an accompaniment to their voices, make all the music for a variety of strange dances and manœuvres too numerous to mention.

On the third day, and during these dancing scenes, the whole village appears to be suddenly thrown into the greatest consternation by the appearance of a man who is running about on the prairie, apparently in great trouble, and gradually approaching the village, which he at length enters, running through every part of it as if he were in great distress. His body is entirely naked, and painted black; his face frightfully

indented with white and red; and in his hand is a long rod or wand painted white. He is called the *Evil Spirit*. He runs into the lodges and out again with the greatest eagerness, as if intent upon some mischief, but is as often driven back by the great medicine-pipe of the master of ceremonies, who continually thrusts it between him and the females who are running and screaming for protection. His wand is wrested from him at length, and the village again restored to tranquillity.

On the fourth day a scene is enacted by the penitents, compared to which all that has passed before is mere pastime. Exhausted by fasting and thirsting for four days and nights, one of these poor fellows walks to near the centre of the lodge. There, resting upon his knees, with his head inclined downwards, he submits to the operation of those appointed to perform these acts of cruelty.—They take up between the thumb and finger, an inch and a half of skin and flesh, with a portion of muscle, on the back side of each shoulder, and force a large dull knife through it. After this is withdrawn, splints, of the size of a man's thumb, are forced through them, to which are attached a couple of cords, descending from the top of

the lodge; and by these he is drawn up till his feet are nearly raised from the ground. In the same manner splints or arrows are put through the arms below the shoulder, below the elbow, on the thighs, and below the knees; and attached to these splints are his bow and quiver, his shield, his lance and medicine-bags, with several heads and horns of buffaloes.

He is now gradually raised by the cords until all these weights are free, and his feet six or seven feet above the ground. In this condition, with the blood flowing in streams from his hands and feet, he hangs in the most exquisite agony, uttering, in pitiful groans and cries, his earnest prayers to the Great Spirit to spare his life—to forgive his sins—and that he may be successful in battle, and always have buffalo in abundance for his subsistence. As soon as one is thus suspended, the same horrid operation is performed on others; and none of them were, in the case witnessed by Mr. Catlin, let down until all appearance of life had disappeared. They were then dropped upon the ground, and left to rise as they might.

When they were able to do this, they advanced to another part of the lodge, and sacrificed one, two or three fingers by laying them

on the skull of a buffalo's head, to be struck off by a hatchet. They are then led out in front of the lodge with all their weights dragging after them, where, in the circular area, in presence of the whole village, a scene takes place of a still more appalling nature. Around their emblem of the ark a hundred or more young men, naked, holding each other by the hand, their bodies painted in all varieties of colors and curious forms, commence a circular movement with the greatest velocity possible, uniting their voices in the most piercing yells of lamentation. Outside of this circle are led the bleeding penitents, each one with an athletic man on each side of him, who take them by a leathern thong fastened around the wrist, and running round with all speed violently urge them forward, until, from weakness and exhaustion they begin to falter, and at length sink down into the dirt. There they are still dragged until all appearance of life is gone, for the second time.

While lying in this condition many fine presents of robes, guns, and even horses, are brought and placed by them. These their squaws stand ready to carry off; but the sufferers themselves are left to recover their senses and return home without the slightest assistance from their friends.

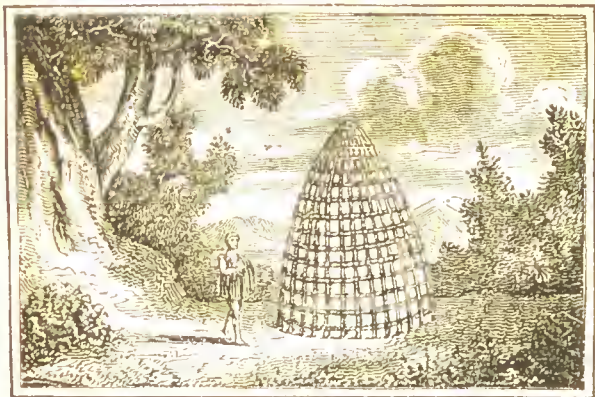
Connected with the belief of the Indians relating to spirits, is a curious custom which Mr. Heckewelder, who observed it among all the tribes with which he was acquainted, calls the 'initiation of boys.' Among the Virginian tribes, this ceremony was called '*huskanaw*'-ing. It was practised once every twelve or fifteen years, or oftener, as the boys grow up in a tribe. None of them could become chiefs without having gone through this discipline; and generally those were selected for it who, from their activity and good appearance, were thought most likely to be sooner or later promoted.

The ceremony commenced with a wild dance, in which all the people of the village, including the women, took part, and toward the close of which the boys to be *huskanawed*, were compelled to 'run the gantlet'* of the rest of the company. The main thing, however, was to take them into the woods, and there shut them up close, night and day, for some weeks, all together in a *huskanaw-pent*† made for this purpose, with lattice-wire, and so as to admit a free passage of air. During this time they had no sustenance allowed them but a decoction of certain herbs and roots. These, perhaps, had

* See Chapter on *Warfare*.

† See next page.

an intoxicating quality; but, at all events the effect of the whole process was to make the patients, as an old historian says, 'stark and staring mad,' for the time. The Indians, also supposed that all this discipline served to blot out



from the mind of the young warrior, the prejudices and follies of his childhood, and thus to fit him for acting a dignified and energetic part in his tribe. A similar practice was in use with the Canadians, among whom, whatever the child dreamed of most during the application of it, was considered his guardian genius: the figure of it was *tattooed* upon his skin; and a new name was given him in allusion to it. The Delawares and other modern tribes have adopted nearly the same custom.

The Indians place great confidence in *dreams* on all occasions. Hence fasting is encouraged, to promote them; and hence, among tribes which have no regular dreaming-season for children, it is common for the latter to fast at the suggestion of their parents, frequently and long at a time.

Tanner relates an anecdote of an old and very distinguished warrior of one of the North Western tribes, whom he met at Red River. This man dreamed in his childhood that a *bat* came to him; and that animal he therefore selected for his medicine or guardian spirit. To all the costly charms for either war or hunting, used by other Indians, he never afterwards paid the least attention. He constantly wore, through life, the skin of a bat tied to the crown of his head; and in his frequent war-excursions against the Sioux of the Mississippi, he went into battle exulting in the confidence that no man who could not hit a bat upon the wing would ever be able to hit *him*. The fact that he had received no wounds in battle, he accordingly attributed to the efficacy of his fasting, and the protection of the bat.

Mr Tanner also relates of Net-no-kwa, his foster mother, that, according to her own state-

ment, at about twelve years of age, she had fasted for ten successive days. In her dreams, a man came and stood before her, and after speaking of many things, gave her two sticks, saying, —‘I give you these to walk upon; and your hair, I give it to be like snow.’ In all her subsequent life, the good woman retained a vivid faith in this vision. In times of the greatest suffering from hunger and other causes, she always cheered her family by the assurance that it was given to her to crawl on two sticks, (crutches) and to have her head grow white like the snow.

Dreaming of particular things, such as the sky, clouds, birds, and other things *above*, is by the Lake Indians commonly thought favorable to the person concerned; others, the reverse. Many believe that they receive through this medium, also, intimation even of things which are to happen or have happened in remote times, as before birth and after death. A Delaware once told Mr. Heckewelder that he recollected distinctly a number of most wonderful facts related to him by his Spirit, during the fasting process of *initiation*. Hence he now believed, among other things, that he had himself lived through two generations, having died

twice, and been born a third time, to live out the present generation, after which he expected to die a third time, and then never more return to his own country. Other most singular notions, the result of his derangement under the discipline before described, he related as special communications made to him by a supernatural authority not to be doubted for a moment.

The ancient Virginians had an *idol* set up in every town, regarded as sacred, and kept in a house erected and taken care of by the priests for the purpose. This represented, not the Supreme *Good Spirit*,—in whom however these tribes fully believed,—but usually the evil one, whose favor they thought it more necessary to propitiate by adoration and sacrifices on account of his supposed malignity. In other cases it was considered simply the Guardian or Tutelar Spirit of the tribe or town.

These buildings were commonly by the priests kept closed, and barred up very strongly, to prevent the intrusion of the whites, as well as of the generality of the Indians themselves. The only instance in which an Englishman is known to have seen the inside of one of them, is related by the historian Beverley as

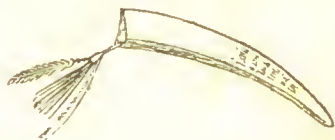
having happened to himself and a party of his friends, who were one day ranging the woods round about an Indian village, when the inhabitants were mostly absent from the place.

Finding themselves master of so fair an opportunity, and resolved to make good use of it, they proceeded to search the woods far and wide for the 'Quioccason.' Having found it, they removed more than a dozen large logs with which the entrance was barricadoed, and went in. At first nothing could be seen but naked walls, with a wide fire-place in the centre of the floor, and a hole in the middle of the roof as a vent for the smoke. The building was about eighteen feet wide, and thirty long, built like a common Virginian cabin, but larger. Some posts were before long discovered, set up round the walls, with faces carved on them and painted,—no doubt used in religious dances.

At length these inquisitive gentlemen observed, in groping about, that at the farther end of the room, eight or ten feet of it seemed to be cut off by a partition of close mats, behind which it was 'dismal dark.' They were a little scrupulous as to entering this obscure recess, but at length ventured in. Reaching about there, they soon felt some posts; these

were found to support shelves; and upon the shelves were found three mats, rolled up and sewed fast together. Having taken these down to the light, and ripped them open, one was found to contain some large human bones (probably those of Indian chiefs or kings, preserved,) and among the rest a thigh-bone of extraordinary length.

In the second mat were several warlike weapons, of the size of a tomahawk, and resembling the wooden falchion formerly used by prize-fighters in England, excepting that they were furnished with no guard for the fingers. They were made of a rough heavy wood, finely grained, and well painted. To one was fastened a wild-turkey's 'beard' painted red; and two of the longest wing-feathers hung dangling at the end by a string.



In the third mat were the various limbs of an image,—including a board three and a half feet long, with an indenture at the upper end, like a fork, to fasten the head upon,—half-

hoops, nailed to the edges, to assist in stuffing out the body—pieces of cloth, rolls made up for arms and legs, and various other matters of the kind. The whole, being put together, made a figure like this:—



Having gratified their curiosity thus far, the party began to think of the danger of being discovered and punished by the Indians. They

replaced everything as well as they could, and retreated.

The imposing aspect of this image, whenever it was set up, seems to have been much heightened by the artful management of the priest, in casting light, or rather darkness, upon it, by aid of the mat curtains,—so that it glared out upon the gazing multitude, a grim and ghastly spectre. The spectators were kept at a distance sufficient to prevent a narrow inspection; and a conjurer might easily lend his ingenuity to complete the imposition, by concealing himself in the dark cavity behind, and there moving the machinery of the image. Idols of this description are not used in modern times. Images, a few inches in length, are frequently carried by hunters. and others, as a *medicine*.

CHAPTER IX.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES of the Indians—Different modes of burial—Grave-fire of the Chippewas—Canadian customs of mourning—Customs of other Northern tribes—Presents to the dead—‘Feasts with the Dead’—Anecdotes—Account of the burial of the wife of SHINGASK—Oratorical honors paid to the dead.

The Indians universally agree in paying a very marked attention of *some* kind to both the remains and the memory of the dead. If they are slain in battle, every exertion is made to carry off their bodies, to be properly buried, as well as to save them from being scalped.

The dead, when enclosed in a grave, are generally buried in a sitting posture, and in this situation the remains of those apparently deceased a century ago, are now and then found, at the present day, along the Atlantic coast. In many cases the grave was lined with stout birch-bark, or fortified with a wooden framework within, so as to serve the purpose of a *coffin*.

If persons die on a hunting-excursion, remote from home, their remains are preserved by burning or otherwise, to be borne back to their own land. Frequently, in cases of this kind,—and

among some Northern tribes regularly in all cases,—a scaffold, such as the adjoining sketch



represents, is erected, to be the temporary resting-place; and this is perhaps ornamented with the verdure of a growing wild vine, carefully planted for the purpose. One object of this practice is to protect the dead from wolves and other wild animals. Another, as the Indians themselves sometimes say, is to keep the remains of their friends, as a consolation, within sight of the survivors.

The Chippewas have, in some sections, a
II—15*

practice of placing a fire on the grave, for several nights after the interment of a person. This is lit in the evening, (commonly by a near relative,) and supplied with sticks of dry wood, to keep up a small but lively blaze, for several hours. It is renewed four successive nights, and sometimes longer.*

Making *presents* to the deceased is a universal custom. Formerly, indeed, the offerings were more costly than at present. The arms, treasures, paints and ornaments of the New England Indians were buried with them.† The Canadian savages used to strip themselves of everything most valuable on these occasions to adorn the corpse; to open the grave from time to time, to exchange the old decorations for new ones; and to carry food and place it on the ground near by,—which, as it rarely failed to be devoured by wolves, was superstitiously appropriated to the appetite of the souls.‡

Mourning, under some form, is every where practised. Among the Canadians, as soon as a sick person expired, the relatives commenced crying and weeping,—the corpse, dressed for burial, being exposed near the door of the cabin. Sometimes other mourners were hired

* Schoolcraft. † Trumbull's Connecticut. ‡ Charlevoix.

to weep with the friends. 'Open table' was kept during these ceremonies, which continued as long as the family were able to provide an entertainment for all who chose to attend. Games played for prizes, such as racing and shooting at a mark, followed the funeral; and after this the expenditures of the mourners were in some degree returned to them by formal presents from the company—called *covering the dead*. The 'mourning' of the relatives continued for a year or more, under very severe regulations. The nearest of them were for some time not only obliged to have their hair all cut off, and their faces blacked, (which is also a common custom in modern times,) but were also forbidden to look at any person in the face, to make any visit, eat anything hot, or warm themselves at a fire. This applied mostly to the widow and widower; and, as among the modern Chippewas, the female continued her mourning observances for a greater or less time, according to the pleasure of the relatives of the deceased husband. Chiefs were expected to mourn only six months. Men never *wept* at all, that being an indication of sorrow which was thought inconsistent with the character of a warrior. Peculiar ceremonies

attended the funerals of those who died violent deaths.—Most of these customs were common to the New England and Southern tribes, as well as to those of the North.

Among the Chippewas, when an infant dies, the mother carries about with her, for some months, an image of wood in the same cradle or frame. The widow has a more singular practice of making up a roll of her best apparel, wrapped in a piece of cloth, and with the ornaments of the husband attached to it. This she carries constantly with her as a badge of her widowhood, until the relatives of the husband choose to call upon her and take it away, when she is at liberty to marry again.

An instance is mentioned of a woman who was left to mourn in this manner for several years, until she grew so weary of it as to remonstrate with the husband's friends. As some of them passed her lodge, she went out and told them she was poor, and had no clothes except those wrapped up in the badge, which were *sacred*; and although she was not anxious to marry again, she desired permission to make use of her garments. They answered, that 'they were going to Mackinac, and would think of it.' On their return, finding her still faith-

ful, they took her badge, (called her 'husband,') and made her a handsome present of eloathing as a reward for her eonstaney.*

Some of the Northern tribes have what is called a 'Feast with the dead,' eaten over the grave, with the notion that their fire and the odour of vietuals induce the soul to return and partake with them. Formerly, among the Canadians and the Five Nations, a great festival of this deseription was eonducted on a more liberal scale. A plaee being first appointed, they elected a King of the Feast, to make the necessary arrangements, including an invitation of the neighboring villages. The ceremonies began with a long and solemn proeession to the burial-place,—and every town had one,—where the bodies were uncovered, and the multitude stopped to regard the ghastly spectacle in a sad and reverential silence, broken only at length by the eries of the women. Other mourning ceremonies followed, which eontinued for some days. Games were played as at the first funeral, and presents distributed; and the whole ended with a second and final interment of the remains in one large eommon receptaele prepared for the purpose.†

* Mc'Kenney.

† Charlevoix.

An American traveller in the North-western regions speaks of having witnessed the mourning of a father and mother, among the Sioux of the Mississippi. It was for a favorite child, four years old; and the father in particular took the affliction so much to heart, as not only to wound his limbs severely with arrows and sharp broken flints,—as is not unfrequently the case,—but actually to reduce himself to sickness, and finally to death itself. But, what was most remarkable, the woman who had hitherto appeared inconsolable, on seeing her husband expire, dried up her tears, and put on a countenance of cheerful resignation. The traveller was of course surprised by this conduct, and he determined to satisfy his curiosity by inquiring the reasons. She told him that as the child was young when it died, and unable to support itself in the country of spirits, both she and her husband had been apprehensive that its situation would be far from happy; but no sooner did she behold its father depart for the same place, who not only loved the child with the tenderest affection, but was a good hunter, and would be able to provide plentifully for its support, than she ceased to mourn. She added, that she now saw no reason to continue her tears, as the child on

whom she doated, was happy under the care and protection of a fond father, and she had only one wish that remained ungratified, which was that of being herself with *them*.*

The public honors paid to the dead vary much, according to the rank and character of the parties concerned. Mr. Heckewelder was eye-witness of the ceremonies attending the funeral of a very respectable woman, the wife of SHINGASK, a distinguished Delaware Chieftain; and a description of these will convey the best idea of what is customary among partially civilized tribes on similar occasions.

The moment of her decease was announced through the village by women appointed for that purpose, who went through the streets crying — ‘She is no more! She is no more!’ The place soon became a scene of universal mourning; cries and lamentations were heard from all quarters. It appeared to be truly the expression of a general feeling for a general loss. The whole day passed in this manner.

The next morning, between nine and ten o’clock, two counsellors, or ‘wise men,’ of the tribe came to invite Mr. Heckewelder, and an Indian trader who lodged with him, to attend

* Carver’s Travels.

and assist at the funeral. They proceeded accordingly to the house of Shingask, where they saw the corpse lying in a coffin, made by the trader's carpenter, who was a white man,—(the Indians, we have remarked, often enclosed the body in an envelope of birch-bark)—and dressed and painted in the most superb Indian style. Her garments, all new, were set off with rows of silver broaches, one row joining the other. Over the sleeves of her new ruffled shirt were broad silver arm-spangles from her shoulder down to her wrist, on which were bands, forming a kind of mittens, worked together of wampum, in the same manner as the belts which they use when they deliver speeches. Her long plaited hair was confined by broad bands of silver, one band joining the other, yet not of the same size, but tapering from the head downwards, and running at the lower end to a point. On the neck were hanging five broad belts of wampum tied together at the ends, each of a size smaller than the other, the largest of which reached below her breast, the next largest reaching to a few inches of it, and so on, the uppermost one being the smallest. Her scarlet leggins were decorated with different colored ribands, sewed on, the outer edges be-

ing finished off with small beads, also of various colors. Her mocassens were ornamented with the most striking figures, wrought on the leather with colored porcupine-quills, on the borders of which, round the ancles, were fastened a number of small round silver bells, of about the size of a musket ball. All these things, together with the vermilion paint, judiciously laid on, so as to set her off in the highest style, decorated her person in such a manner, that perhaps nothing of the kind could exceed it.

The spectators having retired, a number of articles were brought out of the house and placed in the coffin, wherever there was room to put them in, among which were a new shirt, a dressed deer skin for shoes, a pair of scissors, needles, thread, a knife, a pewter basin and spoon, a pint cup, and other similar things, with a number of trinkets and small articles which she was fond of while living. The lid was then fastened on the coffin with three straps, and three polished round poles, five or six feet long, were laid across it, near each other. All these were also separately fastened with straps cut up from a tanned elk-hide; and a small bag of vermilion paint, with some flannel to lay it on, was then thrust into the coffin through the

hole cut out at the head of it. This hole, the Indians say, is for the spirit of the deceased to go in and out at pleasure, until it has found the place of its future residence.

Every thing being in order, the two white men were requested to act as the foremost bearers, while two women were placed at the middle pole, and two men at the last one. A leader walked before them, to guide the procession. Shingask came next to the bearers, alone, followed by six principal war-chiefs and counsellors, after whom were people of all ranks, then women and children, and lastly two stout men carrying loads of European manufactured goods upon their shoulders. At the same moment when the procession moved, several women were seen starting off, with large kettles, dishes, spoons, and dried elk-meats in baskets for the burial-place. The chief mourners among the women, also took their own course to the right of the procession, some fifteen or twenty yards from the body, and opposite to it; and there they made the air resound with their shrill and loud lamentations.

On reaching the grave, the lid of the coffin was again taken off, and the whole train arranged themselves into a semi-circle on the south

side of it, seating themselves on the ground, and leaving a separate place within for the white men. Shingask meanwhile retired to a spot at some distance, to mourn silently by himself, with his head bowed to the ground. The female mourners seated themselves promiscuously near to each other, among some low bushes that were at the distance of from twelve to fifteen yards east of the grave.

In this situation they remained for the space of more than two hours: not a sound was heard from any quarter, though the numbers that attended were very great; nor did any person move from his seat to view the body, which had been lightly covered over with a clean white sheet. All appeared to be in profound reflection and solemn mourning. Sighs and sobs were now and then heard from the female mourners, but so uttered as not to disturb the assembly; it seemed rather as if intended to keep the feeling of sorrow alive in a manner becoming the occasion.

At length, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, six men stepped forward to put the lid upon the coffin, and let down the body into the grave, when suddenly three of the women mourners rushed from their seats, and forcing

themselves between these men and the corpse, loudly called out to the deceased to 'arise and go with them, and not to forsake them.' They even took hold of her arms and legs; at first it seemed as if they were caressing her, afterwards they appeared to pull with more violence, as if they intended to run away with the body, crying out all the while, 'Arise, arise! Come with us! Don't leave us! Don't abandon us!' At last they retired, plucking at their garments, pulling their hair, and uttering loud cries and lamentations, with all the appearance of frantic despair. After they were seated on the ground, they continued in the same manner crying, and sobbing, and pulling at the grass and shrubs, as if their minds were so totally bewildered, that they knew not what they were doing.

These women having gone through their part of the ceremony, which took up about fifteen minutes, the six men whom they had interrupted, and who had remained at the distance of about five feet from the corpse, again stepped forward to do their duty. They let down the coffin into the earth, and laid two thin poles of about four inches in diameter, from which the bark had been taken off, lengthwise and close together over the grave, after which they retired. Then

the husband of the deceased advanced with a very slow pace, and when he came to the grave, walked over it on these poles, and proceeded forward in the same manner into an extensive adjoining prairie which commenced at this spot.

When the widowed Chief had advanced so far that he could not hear what was doing at the grave, a painted post, on which were drawn various figures, emblematic of the deceased's situation in life and of her having been the wife of a valiant warrior, was brought by two men and delivered to a third, a man of note: he planted it in such a manner that it rested on the coffin at the head of the grave, and took great care that a certain part of the drawings should be exposed to the East, or rising of the sun. Then, while he held the post erect and properly situated, some women filled up the grave with hoes, and having placed dry leaves and pieces of bark over it, so that none of the fresh ground was visible, they retired, and some men, with timbers fitted beforehand for the purpose, enclosed the grave about breast-high, so as to secure it from the approach of the wild beasts.

The next thing in order was a repast for all present, which had been cooked at some dis-

tance from the spot. This finished, the goods which had been carried by the two men in the rear, were distributed, so generally that even the youngest of the company partook of the donation, and yet with a regard to justice which favored those most who had rendered most service. Articles of little value, such as gartering, tape, needles, beads, and the like, were given to the smaller girls; the older ones received a pair of scissors, needles and thread, and a yard or two of riband. The boys had a knife, a jews-harp, awl-blades, or something of similar value. Some of the grown persons received a new suit of clothes, consisting generally of a blanket, shirt, and leggins, of the value in the whole of about eight dollars; and the women, (that is, those who had rendered some service) a blanket, ruffled shirts, stroud and leggins, the whole worth from ten to twelve dollars. Mr. Heckewelder and the trader were each presented with a silk cravat and a pair of leggins. In all, the distribution amounted to about two hundred dollars.

The whole ceremony continued six hours. At dusk, a kettle of victuals was carried to the grave and placed upon it; and the same was done every evening for the space of three

weeks, at the end of which it was supposed that the traveller had found her place of residence in the land of souls. During that time the lamentations of the female-mourners were heard on the evenings of each day, though not so loud nor so violent as before.

It is not difficult to discriminate, in the foregoing description, between those customs peculiar to the Indians in their barbarous state, and those which the Delawares had borrowed from the example of their civilized neighbors. The whole scene was a singular and very interesting mixture of the two.

The setting up a post over the grave, here mentioned, was practised by the Canadian tribes in the time of Charlevoix. Henry observed the custom, during the last century, among the Assineboins, who apparently planted it for the purpose of representing upon it, by paint and various characters, the badge and achievements of the deceased. The speaker who volunteered or was appointed to make an address on his character,—another custom with many tribes,—also used to strike forcibly upon this post, (much as was usual in religious and other dances,) to arouse the attention of his audience.

CHAPTER X.

Various Indian customs, not heretofore noticed—Modes of measuring time and distance—Ideas of geography, astronomy, computation, &c.—Division of the seasons—Modes of recording events—Indian Arithmetic—Indian devices to serve the purpose of writing and painting—Anecdote of the Sioux—Of the Delawares—Of a Shawanee—Of WAMEGONABIEW—Other anecdotes illustrative of customs.

Our account of the Indian customs could hardly be considered tolerably complete without some description of the contrivances by which they supply their deficiency in the knowledge of our most common and indispensable instruments and arts. Such are the means of dividing and reckoning *time*, of transmitting the record of events from one generation to another, and of communicating information from one person to another in cases where even oral language cannot be used.

Their astonishing precision in measuring the hours of the day by the sun, as well as those of the night by the moon and stars, have been observed by all who have lived among them. As Roger Williams truly says,—‘The Sunne and Moone, in the observation of all the Sonnes of Men, even the wildest, are the great Directors of the day and night;’ but, he adds,—

The *Indians* find the Sunne so sweet,
He is a God, they say.

Nor can it be much wondered at that so many savage nations have, in the excess of this feeling, even worshipped the glorious luminaries of the sky, transferring, in their superstitious blindness, to the most beautiful and useful of created things, the adoration due only to the great Creator of them all. Such, however, is by no means a regular rite of the American Indians. They call the Sun a 'god,'—meaning a spirit or *manitto*,—only as they give that name always to whatever event or object they cannot fully comprehend and account for.

It is true that many tribes, and perhaps all, in their savage state, are in the habit of observing certain ceremonies on the occasion of certain changes in the appearance of the heavenly bodies. An eclipse, particularly, is looked upon as the signal of some disastrous revolution; and, as Charlevoix says of the Canadians, 'they shoot many arrows into the air, to drive away the supposed enemies of the Sun and Moon.' The Hurons, and some other tribes, believing the Moon, under these circumstances to be *sick*, did their utmost to raise a tremendous noise to arouse and cheer her,—

even beating and pelting their dogs also with sticks and stones, 'to set them a-yelping' their share of this doleful concert. Prayers and various ceremonies are common upon these occasions. Some of the fishing tribes on the North-west coast of the continent make use of much the same ceremonies, on similar occasions, under the apprehension that the moon is about being *swallowed by a large eod-fish*.*

Their notions of *thunder* were formerly no less fanciful. Some of them took it for the voice of monsters flying in the air. One Canadian tribe believed it to be the effort made by a Spirit 'to bring up a snake he had swallowed;' and hence, said they, the long winding trace left in the bark of a tree which was struck by lightning.† In some sections the same notions still remain. The Indians account for earthquakes with about an equal clearness. The Delawares and others, who supposed the earth to be supported *on the back of a great tortoise*, of course attributed the motion to the animal's changing his position.‡

None of the tribes know enough of astronomy to make a distinction between the planets and the fixed stars, except so far as to divide

* Jewett's Narrative. † Charlevoix. ‡ Heckewelder.

some of the latter, like the whites, into constellations, which they name from their supposed resemblance to certain objects. Our *Pleiades* many of them call the *Dancers*. The Canadians gave the name of the *Bear* to four of that cluster, which we call the *Great Bear*. The three in the rear they compared to three *Hunters* in pursuit of the animal,—the small one near the second of these being considered the *Kettle* in which the second hunter carried his provisions.

The Polar Star has been very generally noticed by the Indians as the ‘star that never moves;’ and this when visible, is always their travelling guide in the night-time. In cloudy weather, whether by day or night, they have astonishingly sure and speedy modes of ascertaining directions and distances. They will travel a line to almost any given point of the compass, for any given time, by observing, as they run, the difference in the moss, or in the thickness of the bark on the northern and southern sides of the trees, together with various other minute circumstances which a white man would scarcely notice if pointed out to him. Their accurate knowledge of the face of the country which they traverse, is no doubt of

essential service. They can generally tell, when they come to a stream, into what larger one it empties. They know how to take advantage of dividing ridges where the streams have their source; and they take good care, in travelling upon high lands, to impress their memory with a full and correct idea of the position of the country, and the direction of their own path below. Well may they say, as they sometimes do to white men,—‘How *can* we go wrong, when we know where we are going to?’

The Indians reckon time rather by nights, than, like the whites, by days. They say: ‘It is so many nights’ travelling’ to such a place; and in speaking of one day: ‘you will see me again when the sun stands there,’—pointing to the heavens. Roger Williams says of the New England tribes with which he lived, that they were so punctual in their own promises of keeping appointments, as sometimes to ‘charge him with a lye, for not exactly keeping time, when he was hindered.’

The Indian year is divided into twelve moons,—or, among some tribes, thirteen,—each of which has its particular name founded upon appearances in nature; and as these vary in differ-

ent latitudes, the names of course vary also. Thus the Delawares, when they formerly inhabited Pennsylvania, used to call March the *shad* moon, because this fish at that time began to ascend the fresh-water rivers from the sea. When they removed into the Ohio wilderness, they gave to the same season the title of the *sap-running* or *sugar-making* month. April was among them the *Spring* month; May, the *planting*; June, the *fawn* month, (when the deer brought forth their young); July, the *summer*; August, the moon of *roasting ears* (of green corn); September, the *autumnal*; October, the *harvest*; December, the *hunting* (when the deer dropped its antlers.) January was the *moose* or *squirrel* moon, because those animals then left their holes; and as frogs began to croak in the warm days of February, that was the *frog* moon. Some tribes call January by a name denoting the 'sun's return,' probably because at that season the days begin to lengthen.

The tribes of the North-west have other distinctions, suggested by the circumstances of their own country and climate. Beginning with March, they have the *worm* moon, (because the worms come out from the bark of trees,) the

moon of *plants*, of *flowers*, the *hot* moon, the *buck* moon, the *sturgeon* moon; and then the *corn*, the *travelling* (when they leave their village to commence winter hunting,) the *beaver*, the *hunting*, the *cold*, and the *snow* moon, the last being February.

It is common in the temperate latitudes for the Indians to commence planting their corn when the leaf of the white oak is of the size of a mouse's ear; and from them some of the whites have borrowed the custom. They also observe the arrival of certain birds. The whipperwill as some of them imagine, means, by hovering over them and calling out his Indian name, '*Wekolis*,' to remind them of the planting-time, as if he said to them, '*Hacki-heck!*'—'Go to planting corn!'

When they refer to what we call years, it is commonly under the name of 'winters' or 'snows.' It is more customary, however, to calculate ages by some remarkable event which has taken place within their remembrance, such as a very severe winter, a deep snow, an extraordinary freshet, a general war, or perhaps the building of a new town by the white people. The old Delawares used to tell Mr. Heckewelder that when their '*Elder Brother*,' MIQUON,

(William Penn,) *first talked with their forefathers*, they were of such a size, 'they could catch butterflies,' or 'hit a bird with the bow and arrow.'

Among most of the tribes there has always been some mode, however imperfect, of transmitting the record of important events from one generation to another. This was commonly through the medium of councils, in which were exhibited wampum-belts,—or, among some nations, knots of a particular form. These, when explained and commented on by the orator or chief, by way of charging them upon the memory of the assembly as mementoes of certain events, were carefully laid away, to be kept for some future occasion of the same kind. The Delawares preserved very accurately, in this manner, the history of all their early intercourse with William Penn, to whom they were exceedingly attached. Their chiefs, as late as the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, used to assemble them at regular seasons for the express purpose of talking over the favorite recollections of the past.

In arithmetic the Indians have not even so much skill as in their astronomy, geography, or history; for their whole art consists in simple

counting. Of the use of figures they have no conception, any more than of written language in general, except so far as they have been instructed by the whites. A traveller among the Sioux of the Mississippi observes, that some of the chiefs one day noticing a draft of an eclipse of the moon, in an astronomical book which he held in his hand, desired that he would permit them to look at it. ‘Happening,’ he adds, ‘to give them the book shut, they began to count the leaves till they came to the place in which the plate was. After they had viewed it, and asked many questions relative to it, I told them they needed not to have taken so much pains to find the leaf on which it was drawn, for I could not only tell in an instant the place, without counting the leaves, but also how many preceded it.

‘They seemed greatly amazed at my assertion, and begged that I would demonstrate to them the possibility of doing it. To this purpose I desired the chief who held the book, to open it at any particular place, and just showing me the page, carefully to conceal the edges of the leaves, so that I might not be able to count them.’

‘This he did with the greatest caution; notwithstanding which, by looking at the folio, I told him, to his great surprise, the number of

leaves. He counted them regularly over, and discovered that I was exact. And when, after repeated trials, the Indians found I could do it with great readiness, and without ever erring in my calculation, they all seemed as much astonished as if I had raised the dead. The only way in which they could account for my knowledge, was by concluding that the book was a *spirit*, and whispered me answers to whatever I demanded of it.* The circumstance, trifling as it was, very soon exalted the traveller's reputation as an amazingly sagacious personage.

To serve in some degree the purpose of writing, the Indians have a very ingenious system of hieroglyphics, not indeed arranged by any rules of science, but suggested by necessity and common sense. For example, on a piece of bark, or on a large tree with the bark taken off for the purpose, by the side of a path, they can and do give every necessary information to those who travel the same way. They will in that manner let them know, that they were a war-party of so many men, from such a place, of such a nation, and of such a tribe; how many of each tribe were in the party; to which tribe the chief or captain belonged; in what direction they

* Carver.

proceeded to meet the enemy; how many days they were out and how many returning; what number of the enemy they had killed; how many prisoners they had brought; how many scalps they had taken; whether they had lost any of their party, and how many; what enemies they had met with, and how many they consisted of; of what nation or tribe their captain was, &c.; all which is perfectly well understood by them at a single glance. They will describe a chase in the same style. All Indian nations adopt this practice to some extent; and the principle upon which it is founded is so natural and so plain that the Delawares, for example, will read the drawings of the Chippewas, Shawanees, Wyandots or Six Nations, with nearly as much ease as they decipher those of their own tribe.

Frequently it is the case that when Indians are travelling to the place of their destination, whether it be on a journey to their distant hunting-grounds or on a war-excursion, some of the young men are sent out to hunt by the way, who, when they have killed a deer, bear, or other animal, bring it to the path, ready to be taken away by those who are coming along, (often with horses) to the place of encampment,

where they all meet at night. Having hung up the meat by the side of the path, these young men make a kind of *sun-dial*, in order to inform those who are coming of the time of day it was when they arrived and when they departed. A clear place in the path is sought for, and if not readily found, one is made by the side of it; and a circle or ring being drawn on the sand or earth, a stick of about two or three feet in length is fixed in the centre, with its upper end bent towards that spot in the horizon where the sun stood at the time of their arrival or departure. If both are to be noted down, two separate sticks are set; but generally one is sufficient, that is, for the time of departure.

Hunters have particular marks, which they make on the trees, where they strike off from the path to their hunting-grounds or place of encampment, which is often at the distance of many miles; yet the women, who come from their towns to bring meat from these camps, will as readily find them as if they were conducted to the spot.*

The nature of the picture-writing of which we have spoken will be illustrated by an anecdote related by Tanner. He was traversing

* Heckewelder.

the woods, in the early spring, on his way towards Red River, (with the view of meeting the white traders there and bartering his furs for goods,) when one morning he noticed on the borders of a stream a little stick standing in the bank, and a piece of birch-bark attached to the top of it. On examination, he found the mark of *a rattle-snake, with a knife, the handle touching the snake, and the point sticking into a bear, with a drooping head.* Near the snake also was the mark of a beaver, with one of its dugs touching the snake. This had been left for Tanner's information by his foster-brother, Wa-me-gon-a-biew; and he gathered from it that the latter, whose badge or *totem* was a rattle-snake, and whose mother's badge was a beaver, had killed a man whose badge was the bear. That he was dead, and not wounded merely, was indicated by the position of the head. The event proved his suppositions entirely correct.

Mr. Heckewelder mentions that on one occasion, in the western country, a white man saw a Shawanee (Ohio) Indian riding a horse which he recognised for his own, and claimed it from him as his property. The Indian calmly answered ' Friend! after a little while, I will call on you at your house, when we shall talk

of this matter.' A few hours afterwards, the Indian came to the white man's house, who insisting on having his horse restored, the other then told him: 'Friend! the horse which you claim belonged to my uncle who lately died; according to the Indian custom, I have become heir to all his property.' The white man not being satisfied, and renewing his demand, the Indian immediately took a coal from the fireplace, and made two striking figures on the door of the house, the one representing the white man taking the horse, and the other, himself, in the act of scalping him; then he coolly asked the trembling claimant 'whether he could read this Indian writing?' The matter was thus settled at once, and the Indian rode off.

Carver relates, that when he was travelling across the wilderness from the Mississippi to Lake Superior, his guide, who was a chief of the Chippewas, fearing that the war-parties of the Sioux, or Naudowessies, with whom his nation were continually fighting, might fall in with him and Carver, and do them some mischief, adopted the following precautionary plan.

He peeled the bark from a large tree, near the entrance of a river, and with wood-coal, mixed with bear's grease, (their usual substitute

for ink,) made, in an uncouth but expressive manner, the figure of the town of the Ottagaumies. He then formed, at the left, a man dressed in skins, by which he intended to represent a Naudowessie, with a line drawn from his mouth to that of a deer, the symbol of the Chippewas. After this he depicted still farther to the left a canoe, as proceeding up the river, in which he placed a man sitting with a hat on. ‘This figure,’ says Carver, ‘was designed to represent myself; and my Frenchman was drawn with a handkerchief tied round his head, and rowing the canoe: to these he added other emblems, among which the Pipe of Peace appeared painted on the prow of the canoe.’

‘The meaning he intended to convey to the Naudowessies, and which I doubt not appeared perfectly intelligible to them, was, that one of the Chippewa chiefs had received a speech from some Naudowessie chiefs at the town of the Ottagaumies, desiring him to conduct the Englishman, who had lately been among them, up the Chippewa river; and that they thereby required, that the Chippewa, although an avowed enemy, should not be molested by them on his passage, since he had the cure of a person whom they esteemed as one of their nation.’

CHAPTER XI.

Traits of Indians who have been more or less civilized—Anecdotes of Indian women and children belonging to Martha's Vineyard, and of others, who were partially educated in the English religion and arts — Conclusion.

Our general view of the manners and customs of the American natives may be properly concluded with the addition of some anecdotes of those members of the race, whether individuals or communities, that have by no means ceased to be Indians in yielding to a certain degree, as in many instances they have, to the mild and benign influences of the arts and religion of the white men. It cannot be too much deplored that, owing to various unfortunate circumstances which need not be here examined at length, these influences have prevailed so rarely and so little as they have; but still it may be said with confidence, that enough appears, in existing facts and in history, to illustrate abundantly the improvement of which the race is by nature susceptible.

For about twenty years after the first settlement of Plymouth, not much was done for the civilisation of the Indians in this quarter of the

country; but after that period the most strenuous efforts were made for many years, by pious preachers of the gospel, and other benevolent gentlemen, deeply interested in the fate of the natives. These efforts were attended with considerable success, so that numerous well-regulated Indian settlements were collected into religious congregations,—especially in the neighborhood of Boston,—and meeting-houses erected, and ministers provided for the instruction of these new subjects of christianity. A few sketches of some of this number will be given here, to the exclusion of a multitude of facts of the same kind which have taken place at different periods in all sections of the country.

About a hundred years since, a book was published in London, which furnished an account of several pious and partially educated Indian chiefs, women and children belonging to the Island called Martha's Vineyard, from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Mayhew, who was himself a preacher and teacher among them for a number of years.

In this book is a sketch, among the rest, of the life and character of an Indian woman, named in her own language, *Assannooshque*, and by the English called 'Old Sarah,' who died

at an advanced age, in Edgartown, on Martha's Vineyard, about the year 1708. She was a member of the Indian church at that place.

Old Sarah was industrious, as Indian men or women are not apt to be. She kept her wigwam in excellent repair, and was generally well provided with all things necessary for the support of her family; so that she brought up her children comfortably, both as to food and raiment, though there were a considerable number of them. She kept a very hospitable house, entertaining with much kindness and bounty such as came to visit her. Persons of the best quality among the Indians, used frequently to lodge at her house, when they happened to be near the place where she lived. She was very observable for her charity and compassion to the poor, which she manifested by feeding them when they were hungry, and visiting them when they were sick; and in many other ways she was able to help and relieve them.

She took particular care of poor fatherless and motherless children: when she heard of any such under suffering circumstances, she used to lead them to her own house, and there keep them, till they could in some other way be provided for.

When any of her own household complained, as sometimes they did, that she gave away too liberally to others what was provided for the use of her own family, she used to tell them there was no danger in giving food to such as needed it, for, 'to such as did so, God would send more, when more was necessary.' And thus the character of this women, says Mr. Mayhew, exactly answered the signification of her Indian name, 'a woman that is a giver of food.'

We are further informed that 'she constantly upheld the worship of God in her family, praying fervently every morning and evening in it herself, unless there were any other person present for whom it might be more proper. And though it was her unhappiness that she never was taught to read, yet she frequently requested others to read the Scriptures in her house; and was a very diligent instructor of her children, in those things in which she was able to teach them.' Old Sarah was much respected and beloved by her acquaintances, and her death, though serene and cheerful to herself, was to them the occasion of unfeigned sorrow.

Of another Indian woman of the same island, named Sarah Hannit, wife of an Indian who

was himself pastor of the church to which she belonged, Mr. Mayhew says that 'the fair and large wigwam wherein she with her husband lived, was a great part of it her own work. The mats, or platted straw, flags and rushes with which it was covered, were wrought by her own hands; and those of them that appeared within side the house, were neatly embroidered with the inner barks of walnut-trees, artificially softened, and dyed of several colors for that end: so that the generality of Indian houses were not so handsome as this was; neither was it inferior to those the chief sachems lived in. The house thus built was kept clean and neat, all things in it being in their proper places. This virtuous woman's husband was constantly so well clothed, and his linen kept so clean and white, that he was always fit to go into the best company, and was known in the gates when he sat amongst the elders of his people. When these good persons had much company at their house, as, being given to hospitality, they frequently had, they entertained them after the best manner which their circumstances would allow of; the good woman and her daughters serving cheerfully on such occasions.'

Bethia Sissetom,—an English and an Indian

name united,—who died in 1721, at the age of nineteen, was the daughter of an Indian named Oggin. ‘There being seldom,’ says Mr. Mayhew, ‘while she was young, any school near to which she could be sent, and she being so exceedingly desirous to learn to read, that no difficulties lying in the way could discourage her from it, she used to embrace every opportunity she could obtain to read a lesson to any one that would hear her. Her mother was but a poor reader, and her father seldom at home; but some of her neighbors seeing how much she was set upon learning her book, and kindly offering to hear her read if she would come to them when they could attend to it, she thankfully accepted the offer, going very often to them; and though the circumstances of the family to which she belonged, were such that she could scarcely be spared long enough from it to go and read a lesson or two in a day, yet she would, by her great industry, redeem time for that in which she so much delighted. In this way she learned to read better than many do who have a school to go to, and time to attend it.’

Samson Occam was the name of an Indian of the Mohegan tribe in Connecticut, who,

during the last century, was taken into the family of the Rev. Mr. Wheelock, and educated in such a manner as to qualify him for preaching among his barbarous countrymen, as he afterwards did for many years much to their satisfaction and benefit. He also preached occasionally among the whites, in Boston and other large places, using the English language with ease and force. He visited England, for the purpose of procuring money in aid of the Indian school established by Mr. Wheelock, and was there treated with much kindness.

There is at this time preaching in England, a Chippewa Indian named Kahkewaquonaby, but by the whites called Peter Jones, who both speaks and writes the language well, and is otherwise educated to a considerable extent.

Large numbers of the Cherokees are well known to be far advanced in most of the arts and manners of the whites. As long since as 1809, when the population of that nation was about 12,000, (including, however, a large number of half-breeds,) and when they had as many as sixty villages and towns, their property in horses, cattle, sheep, ploughs, mills, &c., was estimated at nearly \$600,000. The Choctaws also have made advances in civilisation.

Four years ago, it appeared from a census taken in the one district of the nation, that while the population of that district was 5,627, there were, belonging to the Indians within the same compass, neat cattle, 11,661; horses, 3,974; oxen, 112; hogs, 22,047; sheep, 136; spinning wheels, 530; looms, 124; ploughs, 360; wagons, 32; blacksmiths' shops, 7; coopers' shops, 2; carpenters' shops, 2; schools, 5; scholars in a course of instruction, about 150. In one clan, with a population of 313, who a year before were almost entirely destitute of property, grossly intemperate, and roaming from place to place, there were now 188 horses, 511 cattle, 853 hogs, 7 looms, 68 spinning wheels, 35 ploughs, and 1 school, with 20 or 25 scholars.

In one settlement, the people were so desirous of accommodating a blacksmith among them, that they built a house for him, and cleared for him a field of twelve acres of wild land. They also purchased, with the annuity paid them by the government of the United States, a set of iron and steel tools, at the cost of two hundred dollars, and agreed to pay the blacksmith three hundred more for three years.

Within a few years there has been a young Indian of the Penobscot tribe, (who resides on

an Island in the river of their own name, in Maine,) somewhat distinguished under the title of the 'Indian artist.' His name is Paul Joseph Osson, and he is the third son of John Osson, one of the principal men of the tribe. Paul is now about twenty-one years of age.

Schools have been occasionally established among the Penobscots. In 1828, a catholic priest—these Indians are all catholics—being settled among them for some months, succeeded in collecting about a hundred young Indians, to form a school. They learned reading and writing, many Latin words, and some Canadian French. In writing, the pupils made astonishing progress.

One or two *exhibitions* were got up at this school, and many gentlemen from the neighboring towns attended. The Priest presided, dressed in the robes of the church. His pupils sat around him on elevated seats; and behind him was a band of Indian musicians, who played upon instruments of their own manufacture. The exhibition began with an examination of the smaller scholars; and between the recitations of the classes, the musicians played spirited tunes on their flutes and violins. The music encouraged and cheered the children

amazingly; they seemed, for the time, to forget every thing except the sound. Afterwards they all joined in a vocal concert. The oldest girls began, and the whole school afterward joined them in full chorus, all the pupils keeping time with the most perfect regularity. At this exhibition, Osson first attracted particular attention, by his fine figure, ingenuous countenance, clear, melodious voice, and uncommon improvement in reading and writing. In conversation he showed an intelligence not frequently found among his tribe; and his manners were very respectful. The Penobscots seemed to look upon him with unusual interest; and a proof of the regard they entertained for his character, appeared in the title of '*Deacon*,' which they gravely gave him, and which he retains to this day.

When the school, which continued only three months, was done, Paul, as might be expected, returned to his Indian habits of hunting and fishing, and pursued them without interruption for about a year. He then made a visit to the neighboring village of Bangor, and to some other towns, in the course of which his attention was arrested by the engravings he saw for sale in the stores. The delight he evinced

induced some gentlemen to take him to a painter's room, to see a collection of portraits. From that time, painting seemed to take possession of his whole soul; he employed himself continually in sketching figures upon wood and bark.

The Priest, perceiving the bent of his genius, furnished him with conveniences to practise his beloved art. He chose a variety of subjects—flowers, figures, animals, vessels, houses, and some miniature likenesses of his tribe. Some of his landscapes were done with wonderful accuracy. His rapid progress attracted attention among the whites, and the result of their interest was that the permission of his parents was obtained to place him under the care of a competent instructor. He has since made considerable advances, we believe, in his favorite art, but we have not been able to ascertain that he continues to be constantly devoted to the practice of it.*

Colonel Mc'Kenney, in his Tour to the Lakes, gives an account of a civilized Indian and half-breed family, resident at Sault de St. Marie, on the Strait between Lakes Superior

* See, for some anecdotes of Osson, the 'Juvenile Miscellany' of January, 1831.

and Huron,—the wife and daughters of Mr. Jolinson. This gentleman came out to America from Ireland nearly fifty years since. Being young and adventurous, it occurred to him that he would make a voyage from Montreal up the Lakes. In the course of this expedition and of his subsequent dealings with the Indians in furs, he became acquainted with the daughter of WABAJICK, a distinguished Chippewa chieftain, who lived on an island in one of the lakes. Her hand had been solicited repeatedly by the white traders, but Wabajiek loved her too much to part with her. He had learned, too, to distrust the professions of white men, for some of them had deceived him. The young foreigner, however, having engaged the affections of the fair damsel of the forest, made a successful appeal to the old warrior to give his consent to their union. He went to Montreal, returned, and married her.

This accomplished lady is said to manage her domestic concerns in a manner equally acceptable to her husband and to all who visit them. She dresses nearly in the costume of the Chippewas—a blue petticoat of cloth and a short calico gown, with leggins worked with beads, and mocassins. Her Indian name was

· O-shau-guscoday-way-gua. Her portrait may be seen in the 'Tour to the Lakes.'

The eldest daughter of this lady and Mr. Johnson — of course a half-breed — became many years since the wife of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whose volume of Travels reference has been so frequently made in the preceding pages. Her appearance, (says Col. M.) is characterized by mildness of expression, and softness and delicacy of manners. She dresses with great taste, and wears in all respects the most fashionable civilized costume, excepting only her leggins of black silk, drawn and ruffled round the ancles. She has something of the Indian conformation of feature, with a brilliant dark eye which also indicates her ancestry; but otherwise, it is said, you would never believe that her mother was a Chippewa, were you to hear her converse, or see her beautiful and highly finished compositions, in both prose and poetry. She visited Europe with her father, previous to her marriage, and there received the most flattering attentions from persons of the highest rank.

There is another daughter in this interesting family, older than the lady just mentioned, and also several younger children, some sketch of

whom is furnished by the traveller we have cited. He has preserved the music of a beautiful Indian song called the Chippewa or 'Ojibway Maid,' which was sung with great sweetness by one of the unmarried ladies. The literal translation of it runs thus:—

‘Why! what’s the matter with the young American? He crosses the river with tears in his eyes! He sees the young Ojibway girl preparing to leave the place: he sobs for his sweetheart, because she is going away! but he will not sigh long for her, for as soon as he is out of her sight, he will forget her.’

Anecdotes like these of the readiness of the Indians, under favorable circumstances, to imitate the customs and to be imbued with the spirit of civilized life, might be multiplied to a far greater extent; but the performance of that task would perhaps add little to the pleasure of the reflections which they must have already suggested. Melancholy indeed it is, to be compelled, by even these beautiful instances of genius and feeling, to reflect, with the anxious doubt which no intelligent mind can avoid, on the probable destiny of the race whose character they illustrate.

THE END.







